

*Printed for the use of the Foreign Office. June 1906.*

---

CONFIDENTIAL.

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(8730.)

PART V.

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS OF PERSIA.

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January to March 1906.

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Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Persia.

PART V.

[108]

No. 1.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 1, 1906.)

(No. 951.)

Sir,

Constantinople, December 27, 1905.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 924 of the 18th instant, I have the honour to forward herewith copy of a letter and inclosures from the Persian Ambassador, in which his Highness was good enough to send me copies of his note to the Porte relative to the disputed frontier near Vazné and Lahijan, and also of the telegram from the Persian Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the same subject.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 1.

Prince Riza Khan to Sir N. O'Connor.

M. l'Ambassadeur et cher Collègue,

Stamboul, le 22 Décembre, 1905.

J'AI l'honneur d'envoyer à votre Excellence ci-inclus les copies de ma note, remise hier à la Sublime Porte, relativement à l'affaire de Vezné et Lahidjian, ainsi que la traduction en Turc de la dépêche du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de Perse concernant la dite affaire.

Veillez, &c.

(Signé) Prince M. RIZA KHAN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 1.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Prince Riza Khan.

(Telegraphic.)

22 Shawwal, 1323.

YOUR Excellency's telegram has been submitted to His Majesty the Shah, who states that the joint inquiry can take place if the invaders are removed from Vazné and the other Persian places, and that as long as they remain on Persian soil the joint inquiry cannot be effective. Doubtless the spirit of unity implanted in Ottoman statesmen will not admit of their approving of such acts, and you should fully explain it to them, and point out the necessity of first withdrawing the invaders before proceeding to a joint inquiry. As has already been explained to you by telegraph, the place where the invaders are was established many years ago by the control of the Mediating Powers, and by repeated decisions, as being in Persian possession, as is established by all kinds of proofs. As long as the invaders are there, how can a joint inquiry be carried out? You should use your best efforts for the immediate removal of the invaders, and report the result. How is it that you are

silent in answer to the request made of you, when you are in possession of full information as to the results of joint inquiries made in former years, and as to the lands in question being in Persian possession? You will doubtless use all your best efforts as instructed and report result. The Ottoman Embassy has received a reply in the same sense to a request made by it to the Atabag-i-Azam.

Inclosure 3 in No. 1.

*Note communicated by the Persian Government to the Ottoman Government.*

I HAVE duly reported to the proper authorities the contents of your Excellency's note of Shavval 18, 1323, in reply to my request for the removal of the Ottoman troops who had encroached on Persian territory at Vazné, Lahijan, and Pessva, and to the proposal for a joint inquiry, both repeatedly suggested. Your Excellency states therein that these places are Ottoman territory, and that they as well as Mirghan and Kulu Sheikh are in the Ranié Shehr Bazar and Mamouret-i-Hamid Kazas, and are the summer pasturages of the Ottoman nomads; that a Turkish Mudir was formerly named to Vazné, and taxes collected there, all of which establishes Turkey's clear right to these lands. You accordingly state that, as Persia has collected 5,000 or 6,000 troops there, the local Government has been obliged to take similar measures in return; but that, in order to establish the rights of Turkey, it has been decided to appoint a Commission to effect a joint inquiry. The names of the Commissioners are given, and it is added that should the result of the inquiry be favourable to the Persian claim the Turkish troops will naturally be withdrawn, but that it is impossible to accede to my request in this sense before the inquiry takes place. Your Excellency further requests me to take prompt steps to induce my Government to appoint its Commissioners to take part in the inquiry and to let you know the result. I have now received a telegram from the Persian Foreign Ministry, stating that the matter having been laid before His Majesty the Shah, His Majesty has stated that the joint inquiry can take place if the Turkish troops are removed from Persian territory, and that as long as these encroachers remain on such Persian territory the inquiry would not be feasible. As obviously the spirit of justice of Ottoman statesmen will preclude them from approving of such actions, surprise has been caused at my failing to reply to the demands put forward by your Excellency that the encroachers must, first of all, be removed from Persian territory before the joint inquiry can be effected; that ample proofs exist that the lands in question are Persian, as has already been established by the investigations of the Mediating Powers, and by the fact that these places have for many years been in possession of the Persians. A reply in this sense has already been given by the Persian Grand Vizier to a demand formulated by the Ottoman Embassy at Tehran. I am therefore instructed to request the immediate removal of the invaders, as by Article III of the last Treaty of Erzeroum the two parties agreed to abstain from claiming this territory, and at the time this Treaty was concluded Vazné, Lahijan, Serdesht, and other places were in Persian occupation, as was clearly established when the Commissioners of the Four Powers visited the locality. This occupation has continued to the present day, as a reference to the maps will show; and when some years ago your Ministry, alleging that Vazné was in dispute, demanded the maintenance of the *status quo*, and subsequently asked for an inquiry into Vazné and other disputed places, it is proved by the correspondence between your Ministry and this Embassy that it was agreed that the joint inquiry should be limited to Vazné, and the documents proving this still exist. The fact that your Government, on the strength of false reports from the Vali and military authorities of Mosul, claims that Vazné, Lahijan, Pessva, Mirghan, and Kulu Sheikh are within the Ottoman dominions, and is sending troops and guns to encroach on those places is entirely at variance with the unity which should prevail in the world of Islam, as I have no doubt your Excellency will admit. I have therefore to request that you will move the proper authorities to withdraw the invaders, and afterwards proceed to an inquiry, and will inform me of the result for the information of my Government.

December 8 (21), 1905.

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No. 2.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 1.)*

Sir,

*India Office, December 30, 1905.*

WITH reference to Sir E. Gorst's letter of the 23rd instant relative to the proposed increase of the Legation guard at Tehran, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose, for Sir E. Grey's information, a copy of a telegram sent to the Government of India on the 24th instant on the subject.

With reference to your letter of the 28th instant on the same subject, I am to say that Mr. Morley concurs in Sir E. Grey's proposal to instruct Mr. Grant Duff by telegraph to concert with the Government of India and His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire the best means of insuring that a force should be available for dispatch to Tehran or any other part of Persia with the least possible delay in the event of necessity arising.

I am to inclose the copy of a further telegram which has been addressed to the Government of India, dated the 29th instant, informing them of the instructions which are being sent to Mr. Grant Duff.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) HORACE WALPOLE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 2.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*India Office, December 24, 1905.*

SEE the telegram of the 22nd instant from Grant Duff as to strengthening escort of Legation at Tehran.

His Majesty's Government are considering whether escort is to be increased; pending decision, please be in readiness to dispatch reinforcement that may be necessary. I should be glad to receive a report from you as to the time it would take to reach Tehran, and as to the number of men you would propose to send; also as to whether, in the event of Bushire Treasury guard being transferred, as Grant Duff suggests, to Shiraz, it will be necessary, in your opinion, to reinforce Bushire.

Inclosure 2 in No. 2.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*India Office, December 29, 1905.*

PERSIA. Please refer to my telegram of the 24th instant. Instructions are being sent to Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran to concert measures in consultation with you and with Resident in Gulf so as to insure that, should necessity arise, there may be a force available for dispatch to Tehran or to any other part of Persia with as little delay as possible. It is not considered necessary that additional guard should at once be sent to Tehran.

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No. 3.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 1.)*

(No. 1.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 1, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to Shiraz and India:—

"My telegram No. 183 of last year, and my despatch No. 237 of the 1st November.

"My request that the Deputy-Governor of Shiraz should be ordered to offer an apology to His Majesty's Consul has been refused by the Persian Government.

"It is important, in my opinion, that we should strictly uphold the principle of the immunity of witnesses sent to the local authorities by British Consuls.

"The conduct of the authorities of Shiraz has been most reprehensible, and the Persian Government is hopelessly obstructive.

"I trust you will send me such instructions as will force them to give way."

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No. 4.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 1.)*

(No. 2.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 1, 1906.

FOLLOWING repeated to Bushire and India:—

"My despatch No. 237 of the 1st November.

"Our outstanding claims against the Persian Government, which are already large, are constantly increasing. Some of them date back for years, and the Persian Government show no disposition to settle them. I informed the Grand Vizier yesterday that I intended to submit for your approval the suggestion that if a reasonable number of these claims were not promptly settled I should demand an audience of the Shah, and lay the matter before His Majesty. I strongly suspect that the neglect of British interests and the state of the country is kept hidden from the Shah, and I desire to warn His Majesty's Government that in my opinion the time is rapidly approaching when diplomatic means will be exhausted.

"Speedy compliance with our requests would probably be secured by a threat to seize the Bushire customs."

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No. 5.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 1.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 1, 1906.

KUTIAK buildings.

I have received your telegram No. 186 of the 30th ultimo, on this subject, and I will tell the Persian Minister that His Majesty's Government learn with surprise that the apology he promised on the 7th December should be made has not been fulfilled. I will add that we shall be unable to accept the reparation offered by the Persian Government as a satisfactory settlement, and the whole question will have to be reopened, unless the Governor and the official actually responsible for the burning of the buildings call in uniform on the Consul within the next few days and apologize.

You should inform the Persian Government of the purport of the above.

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No. 6.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 2.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 1, 1906.

YOUR telegram No. 183 [of 28th December]: Shiraz.

Your action approved.

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No. 7.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 4.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 1, 1906.

YOU are authorized to address strong representations to Persian Government in sense suggested in your telegram No. 1 regarding the molestation of witnesses by Deputy-Governor of Shiraz.

No. 8.

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*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 2.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 1st instant, relative to arms for the Persian Consulates.

*India Office, January 1, 1906.*

*Inclosure in No. 8.*

*Government of India to Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran.*

*January 1, 1906.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

WITH reference to your telegram of the 31st December, our object was to have escort and arms in readiness at Robat so as to save journey from Quetta, which would take three weeks and would involve serious delay in case of emergency. We did not propose to take arms across the frontier, unless you required us to do so.

(Repeated to Secretary of State.)

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No. 9.

*Sir A. Hardinge to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 3, 1906.)*

(Separate and Confidential.)

Sir,

*London, December 23, 1905.*

IT was thought desirable by your predecessor that I should, on relinquishing my duties as His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, draw up a Report, which would be useful to my successor, dealing with the present condition of Persia, as well as with the principal concrete questions affecting British political and commercial interests in that country. It is difficult to compress within brief dimensions a review of this nature, but it will be my endeavour to treat these various subjects as concisely as is consistent with lucidity, and I shall begin by summarizing the main elements in the Persian political situation, which will necessitate a recapitulation of some of the chief events of the last few years.

*Financial Position: Loans.*

The integrity and independence of Persia, the maintenance of which may be regarded as the main object of our diplomacy at Tehran, has of late years been threatened by two principal dangers, the first, the acquisition by Russia of an absolutely predominant influence over the Persian State, and the second, the latter's internal decomposition, due mainly to the weakness, extravagance, and financial exhaustion of its Government.

The former of these two dangers has, owing to the present condition of Russia, ceased, for the immediate present, to be threatening, but the second has within the last year or two shown signs of increasing, and unless something can be done to arrest it, an acute internal crisis in Persian affairs cannot, I think, long be delayed. Its primary cause, though deeper ones lie of course below it, is the personal character of the Shah.

Muzaffer-ed-din Shah is probably the only Prince of the Kajar dynasty, who has shown conspicuous incapacity for the rôle of an autocratic monarch. Naturally kindly and well-meaning, but weak, capricious, and almost totally uneducated, he had lived for more than fifty years, before he came to the throne, in seclusion at Tabreez, as nominal Viceroy of the great Province of Azerbaijan, yet without any real control over its affairs, which were managed by his Vizier, under direct orders from Tehran. He was often kept so short of money there that he had difficulty in paying the expenses of his household; and accordingly, when he ascended the throne, he hastened to recoup himself for these years of leanness by inconceivably reckless extravagance. In this course he was supported and encouraged by a gang of greedy and ignorant Turkish courtiers, who had long been waiting impatiently at Tabreez for his father's death, in order to build up out



of the public revenues, to the plunder of which they looked forward, immense private fortunes for themselves. These men had no notion of politics, or of the rudiments of government; their one idea, whilst ministering to the weaknesses and vices of their sovereign, was to kill and cut up the goose with the golden eggs. It was as though Henry V, on ascending the Throne of England, had handed over to Falstaff and Poins the control of the national exchequer.

There were not indeed wanting in the new Shah's Government abler men, who had served under his father, and to these the Shah and the Tabreez courtiers left the real administration of the country. Two of them, the Amin-es-Sultan, and the Amin-ed-Dowleh were successively Grand Viziers up to two years ago. Both were men of capacity, holding, in theory, modern views and in the domain of foreign affairs disposed to regard England rather than Russia as Persia's best friend and guide. The Amin-es-Sultan was the cleverer and stronger politician of the two, but was inferior in real patriotism and integrity to the Amin-ed-Dowleh, and far readier to sacrifice his own convictions, and the interests of his country to personal considerations or ambitions.

For the first two years of the new reign the Amin-es-Sultan governed fairly satisfactorily, but he was eventually overthrown and exiled to Koom by a Court camarilla, which considered him too powerful, and he was succeeded as Grand Vizier by the Amin-ed-Dowleh.

In the meanwhile, the extravagance of the Shah and the Turkish courtiers had produced its natural result. The revenue no longer sufficed to cover the expenditure, the troops and officials were unpaid and mutinous, the remoter provinces began to get out of hand, and the Persian Government found itself obliged to endeavour to meet the deficit by a loan.

The Amin-ed-Dowleh, after sounding without success Syndicates in neutral countries, such as Holland and Belgium, resolved, as he must choose between England and Russia, to apply, in the first instance, to England, and, notwithstanding great difficulties, was on the point of effecting an arrangement with English capitalists, when a combination of Court, priestly, and Russian influences brought about his dismissal in the summer of 1896. Recalled from Koom, and reinstated as Grand Vizier, the Amin-es-Sultan reversed his predecessor's policy. A variety of causes, which it would take too long to examine in detail, had alienated him from the English and predisposed him to the Russian interest, and on his failing to obtain from England a loan on his own terms, he concluded, behind our backs, the Russian Loan Contract of January 1900, which threw Persia for a time completely into the arms of Russia, and rendered that Power more supreme at Tehran than she had ever been for the previous quarter of a century.

It is important to note the principal features of this Loan Contract, because it is on them that much of later Persian politics hinges. The Loan itself, which was practically advanced by the Russian State, was for 2,250,000*l.* at 5 per cent., to be repaid, in capital and interest, in seventy years out of the revenues of the entire customs of Persia, with the exception of those of "Fars and the Persian Gulf," a loose expression which has occasioned much subsequent controversy. It was redeemable in January 1910, but until it should have been redeemed the Persian Government was prohibited from contracting any fresh foreign loan without the approval of the Russian Government. In the event of Persia's failure to pay the interest, the Russian bank was to be entitled to place controllers in the custom-houses, whose receipts constituted its security, and until the debt was paid the Persian Government was precluded from reducing the customs duties without the consent of the bank.

These were the only formal conditions, but by a secret Agreement the Convention of 1889 prohibiting Persia from building railways in her territory without the consent of Russia was prolonged for another ten years, and it is believed, though it has never been conclusively proved, that Persia pledged herself to allow the passage of Russian troops through her territory in the event of hostilities between Russia and "any other Asiatic Power."

The loan, obtained at the cost of closing for the future the English and all other foreign markets save the Russian to the Persian State, was, as had been foreseen by the Russian Government, quickly squandered by the Shah and the Turkish courtiers. A great part of it was expended on the Royal journey to Europe in 1900, in the course of which the Shah, with an immense and costly retinue, visited all the great Courts of Europe except Berlin and London, and in 1901, when I first went to Persia, the embarrassments of the State were as great as before the conclusion of the loan.

Three alternatives confronted the Grand Vizier: he might either augment the land

tax and effect simultaneous economies in the administration; or he might increase indirect taxation by means of higher customs duties; or lastly, he might contract another foreign loan. From the first course he recoiled as likely to alienate the Court party and the upper classes generally. The second necessitated negotiations with Russia, and also with Turkey, whose Treaties gave her a right to specific treatment for her goods in Persia, and these were accordingly opened with both Governments. Against the third the Amin-es-Sultan long struggled, but the Shah and his entourage had enjoyed their European tour too much not to wish to repeat it, and His Majesty's decision to revisit Europe in 1902 forced the Grand Vizier again to apply for the foreign financial assistance without which the royal journey was impossible.

It is only fair to the Amin-es-Sultan to say that, completely dependent though he was, owing to his past mistakes, upon Russia, he realized the dangers of his situation, and endeavoured, as far as he dared, to recover his balance. Great as was Russian influence when I first went to Persia, there were even then slight indications that the tide was beginning to turn. The Amin-es-Sultan was exceedingly cordial towards me. In April 1902, when in pressing need of money, he borrowed 200,000*l.* at 12 per cent. from the Imperial Bank of Persia (which, as the Shah's State Bank, might be held not to be barred from such advances by the Loan Contract of 1900), on the security of the Customs of Fars and the Persian Gulf. He bestowed, as an earnest of his goodwill towards English interests, an important concession upon Mr. D'Arcy, an English capitalist, in the form of a monopoly for the working of the oil-fields throughout Central and Southern Persia. He concluded with me the Central Persian Telegraph Convention, by which the Indo-European Telegraph Department obtained the control of a new overland telegraph line connecting Tehran with Quetta via Kerman and the Seistan border. He was also willing that the loan, which he foresaw he would have to raise for the Shah's second journey, should be shared in by the Imperial Bank of Persia, and he would probably have borrowed from His Majesty's Government, through the nominal agency of that institution, if the Indian Council had not objected to this method and insisted on any advance to Persia being made directly by the Government of India, and subject to certain pledges in connection with Tariff revision, which the Grand Vizier's relations with Russia made it very difficult for him to give. He was thus compelled, not altogether willingly, to negotiate for financial assistance with Russia alone, and the terms on which she was ready to give it were more onerous than had been the case two years before.

She required—

1. The extension till 1912 of the period during which Persia was precluded from borrowing in any but the Russian market.
2. The construction by a Russian Company of a carriage road from the Russian Trans-Caucasian frontier to Tabreez and Tehran.
3. As compensation for the grant to us of the Central Persia line a Russian telegraph line from Meshed along the Afghan frontier to Seistan.
4. The appointment in connection with Tariff revision of Russian officials in the Persian Customs Department, and the exclusion of England from all participation in, or knowledge of, the projected alteration in the Customs duties.
5. The construction of a Russian pipe-line from Baku right across Persia from north to south, with an outlet on the Persian Gulf.

For these concessions she was prepared to allow Persia to alter her Tariff and to advance to her a further sum of 1,000,000*l.*

It is scarcely necessary to dwell on the real object of the pipe-line condition. The Russian Government did not probably seriously contemplate taking a pipe-line from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf across the huge mountain ranges and arid plateaux of Persia. The proposed concession would, however, have afforded a pretext for establishing a Russian station at a point on the Gulf, at which the southern end of the pipe-line was to be situated, for working from that point northward with parties of Russian engineers, and Cossack guards to protect them, and for getting into relations with the semi-independent Chiefs of South-Western Persia, who would have been won over by Russian subsidies, as well as by promises of Russian support against the

\* Note inserted by request of the India Office:—

"His Majesty's Government were not themselves in a position to provide the necessary funds, and the question of finding the money from Indian revenues was referred to the India Office. Objection was taken there to making the advance through the agency of the Imperial Bank, but the Secretary of State in Council agreed to supply funds for a direct loan to the Persian Government in return for certain concessions, one of which was that the contemplated change in the Persian Tariff should be negotiated with His Majesty's Government as well as with Russia."

encroachments of the Central Government. The Amin-es-Sultan saw the danger, and used our proffered advance and another offer from Mr. D'Arey of a loan of 300,000*l.*, in the form of a discount of the royalties on his oil-fields, in order to beat down the Russian terms. In this he was partially successful. M. de Witte, fearing that the Persian Government might borrow from English sources, and thus escape from his grasp, withdrew the demand for the pipe-line to the Persian Gulf, and modified the one respecting the Meshed-Seistan telegraph line, which, it was agreed, should be constructed and worked by the Persian Government out of the proceeds of the new million to be lent by Russia. A verbal promise was at the same time given by the Shah that the services of Russian signallers should be employed on this line by the Persian Ministry of Telegraphs, and that its Seistan end should not be connected with the Central Persian or Indian telegraphic systems. The Russian Government had already at an earlier stage in the negotiations waived its claim to place Russian officials in the Customs, so long as the interest on the loan was regularly paid, in return for a promise from the Persian Government to dismiss Mr. Maclean, the English chief of the Persian Mint, and to employ no other English officials in its service.

On this basis the second Russian Loan of April 1902 was concluded, and the money provided for the Shah's second journey to Europe. The incidents of the first journey were repeated. Huge sums were expended in the purchase of useless toys, gramophones, the newest kinds of sporting rifles, and fireworks being ordered by the thousand, whilst jewellery was profusely lavished on Parisian courtesans, and at the opening of the year 1903 the resources of the State were again exhausted.\* The Russian Government again let it be known that a third loan of 1,000,000*l.*, or even more, would be forthcoming in return for fresh surrenders of Persian independence, and this time one of the concessions asked was a Russian railway from the Transcaspian frontier to a point on the Indian Ocean within striking distance of the British frontier. Threatened by Court intrigues and by a clerical Mahomedan movement against his subservience to Russia, the Amin-es-Sultan would not even discuss this proposal. He, however, applied to St. Petersburg in March 1903 for an advance of 200,000*l.*, secured on the royalties of the Caspian sea fisheries, which were leased to a Russian subject. This money the Russian Government was prepared to give in return for a practical control of the Persian Mint, which would have enabled the Russian Bank to sweep out of existence its rival, the Imperial Bank of Persia, one of the most important British institutions in the country.

At this juncture, His Majesty's Government offered to advance the 200,000*l.* desired through the nominal agency of the Imperial Bank (which, for technical reasons connected with its concession, was unable to undertake the Caspian fisheries operation itself), and merely asked for the assignment as a supplementary guarantee of the revenues of the posts and telegraphs, and of the Customs of Fars and of the Persian Gulf. These conditions were accepted by the Persian Government, and though the Russian Legation strongly remonstrated with the Amin-es-Sultan in private, it did not venture to protest officially against this violation of the spirit, if not of the letter, of the earlier Loan Agreements, and thus involve itself in a diplomatic controversy with England. The sum actually advanced was small, but the political and moral effects were very great. The Russian loan monopoly, with its far-reaching effects on the Shah's independence, had been publicly overthrown. The British Government at the same time, let it be understood, that a further sum up to 500,000*l.* would be placed by it (also through the Imperial Bank as nominal lender), at the disposal of the Persian Government on conditions to be discussed later on, and that a contribution in the nature of a subsidy might be forthcoming in return for an undertaking by the Shah to grant no roads, railways, or other concessions, whether political or commercial, to foreigners other than English, within an area including Seistan and the southern provinces of Persia. In the meantime, the forces working against the Amin-es-Sultan were daily gaining confidence and strength. The opposition, consisting of the Court or Turkish party, always hostile to the Prime Minister of the day, of the more liberal and patriotic elements, which disliked the Russian loans, and desired the return of the Amin-ed-Dowleh, of the Ulama, who complained that the country had been sold to infidels, and of the commercial classes, who objected to the increased duties levied under the new Tariff, stirred up disorders throughout the provinces against the Government, and

\* It is fair to state that the actual amount received by Persia under the second Loan Agreement was only about 700,000*l.*, as 300,000*l.* were retained by the Russian Government for the payment of advances "à compte courant" made during the negotiations. Russia's policy has always been to make successive small advances at high interest to the Shah, which have eventually to be consolidated into a larger political loan.—A. H. H.

brought about in the autumn of 1903 the dismissal for the second time of the Amin-es-Sultan. His place was taken by the Ain-ed-Dowleh, who still continues Grand Vizier. This statesman, a grandson of Fath Ali Shah and a member of the Turkish Court party, had been a strong Provincial Governor, but was totally unqualified by education or experience for the management of Persia's difficult and complex foreign affairs. Proud, reactionary, and credited with a dislike to all Europeans as such, he seemed disposed during the earlier months of his administration to hold the balance fairly evenly between Russian and English influence, with a slight leaning, if anything, towards the latter; and he declared that he would restore the national finances, not by fresh loans, which he professed to consider suicidal, but by a thorough reorganization of the system of internal taxation. In the spring of 1904 he endeavoured to carry out this plan, with the assistance of M. Naus, the Belgian Minister of Customs, by establishing in every province a Sanduk, or local Treasury, into which all the internal taxes were to be paid by the Provincial Governors, and which, after itself paying fixed salaries and the cost of their administration to the local officials, was to remit the surplus to the Central or General Treasury at Tehran.

Undoubtedly, if this system had been properly carried out a very useful reform would have been effected; the taxes would not have been spent locally, or in other words misappropriated by the provincial authorities, and a considerable sum, which now never reaches Tehran, would have been available for the extinction of the deficit, the payment of the interest on the debt, and the reorganization of the present worthless army.

Unfortunately, the scheme never got much beyond the paper stage: the Shah, Grand Vizier, and courtiers still sold provinces to the highest bidder and were thus forced to allow the purchasers to recoup themselves out of local revenues; the Princes of the Royal House, such as the Vali-Ahd, and the Shua-es-Sultaneh, who ruled the richest and most extensive provinces, could not be compelled to yield obedience to the new system, and such economies, as were effected by it, were of little practical use, the money realized by them being lavished by the Shah on his favourites or on the members of his family, instead of being applied to public objects. The Customs revenue at the same time suffered from the effect of the war with Japan on Russian trade with Persia, and in the summer of 1904, less than a year after he had taken office, the Ain-ed-Dowleh applied to the British Legation for a further loan of 200,000*l.*, which he professed to desire in order to restore the dam at Ahwaz on the Upper Karun, and thus fertilize the Province of Arabistan.

His Majesty's Government replied that they could not advance money for the Ahwaz dam, unless they were satisfied that the undertaking would not be prejudicial to British interests on the Karun, but that they would dispatch an engineer from India to examine and report to them on this question. In the meantime they were willing to make a further advance of 100,000*l.*, repayable in twenty years, and secured on the same revenues, as those specified in the Loan Agreement of April 1903, viz., the Fisheries, Posts and Telegraphs, and the Customs of the Persian Gulf. An arrangement on these lines was concluded, again through the Imperial Bank as nominal lender, in September 1904, and Colonel Morton, of the Indian Irrigation Service, was sent to Ahwaz to study the question of the dam, on which he is still engaged.

Unable to obtain more from England, the Ain-ed-Dowleh next sounded Russia, pleading that he needed money to reorganize the Persian army, and make it strong enough to put down the internal disturbances, of which the Russian Government had so frequently complained. Russia offered in reply an immediate advance of 400,000*l.* on condition that the proposed military reorganization should be entrusted to Russian officers, and that the contracts of certain Austrian instructors, who had recently been invited to Persia, should be cancelled; but this proposal was considered inadmissible by the Persian Government and the negotiations for the time fell through. In the spring of 1905, however, the question of a third royal visit to Europe had again to be faced. The Ain-ed-Dowleh, who hated both the journey and its cost, resisted it as stubbornly as he could, till the Shah plainly threatened to deprive him of office, unless he provided the necessary funds and arranged for him to proceed to Contrexéville and Paris. A sufficient sum for the actual journey was scraped together from various sources, the Grand Vizier himself contributing to it from his private income, but it was necessary to make provision for carrying on the Government in the Shah's absence, and for paying arrears, which, in presence of an annual deficit of about 300,000*l.* per annum, had been for some time mounting up. The Persian Government now conceived the idea of asking the Imperial Bank, which had already lent it rather more than the

terms of its concession allowed, for a sum of 150,000*l.* as a discount on, or redemption of, the annual royalty of 4,000*l.* which it has to pay to the Shah, and when this proposal fell through, owing to difficulties made by the Bank's lawyers, it succeeded in obtaining the sum of 80,000*l.*, repayable in four years at 12 per cent. per annum from Russia, the Russian Government being desirous of conciliating the Vali-Ahd, who was to act as Regent in his father's absence, and to whom therefore this money would be paid. This, however, was a mere temporary palliative, and since the Shah's return to Persia negotiations with His Majesty's Government for financial assistance have been resumed.

A month ago, the Persian Government declared itself, through its Minister in London, willing in return for a further loan from Indian revenues of 200,000*l.* :—

1. To undertake to give no railway or road concessions to foreigners in Seistan or Southern Persia, thus cutting off Russia from communication by a Russo-Persian Railway with the Indian land frontier and the shores of the Indian Ocean.

2. To interpret the expression "Fars and the Persian Gulf," employed in the Russian Loan Contracts in the sense desired by the Government of India, viz., as covering all the ports of Southern Persia, whether on the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, or the Indian Ocean.

An Agreement to this effect appeared imminent, but the Ain-ed-Dowleh has since increased his demands and now wishes for an English loan of 800,000*l.*, stating that, should he fail to obtain it, he will have to turn to Russia, and accept an offer made by her of a third Russian loan of 1,500,000*l.* to be advanced on certain secret political conditions which he declares himself unable at present to reveal.

It appears scarcely probable that in her present state Russia could make a loan of this description, though it must not be forgotten that the temptation to retrieve in the middle East the position, which she has lost on the Pacific, might conceivably influence M. de Witte and might induce him to affect an infinitesimal portion of the 50,000,000*l.* he has just raised in Europe to the purchase of a strong vantage-ground in Persia. Russia was willing in the worst days of the Japanese war to advance 500,000*l.* for the control of the Persian army, and while it appears to me most probable that the Grand Vizier is resorting to the tactics of bluff and blackmail habitual with his countrymen, I should not wish to express myself with undue confidence to this effect. When I left Persia last September, M. Naus informed me that it would be absolutely necessary for the Persian Government to obtain a third large loan, either from Russia or Great Britain, or both, in order to consolidate and convert the numerous small advances on account current, bearing interest at 12 per cent., which have been made to it by the Russian and Imperial Banks. The Customs, Northern and Southern, would still probably bear the payment of interest on another loan of 1,000,000*l.* or 1,500,000*l.* After that, the mortgageable revenues of the Persian State will be exhausted, and unless a portion of the money borrowed is expended on the reorganization of the finances and of the army, instead of being wasted by the Shah and his favourites, the moment must soon come when the Persian Government will be unable to meet its liabilities, to pay its officials and troops, and to maintain such elementary order, as it still preserves in its more tranquil provinces. Should this situation arise, some steps will have to be taken for the protection of the commerce, and personal security of Europeans, and for the maintenance of some form of government by Great Britain, or Russia, or both.

How long the evil day can be deferred I would not myself venture to pronounce with any certainty. M. Naus believes that it will come in three years at the latest; but he does not perhaps sufficiently allow for the fact that the army and officials of the Shah are accustomed to being unpaid for long periods, and to recouping themselves by preying on a docile Oriental population. Moreover, if Persia ceases to pay the interest and sinking fund on her debt, the Russians will be entitled under their loan agreements to take possession of the Customs, other than those of Fars and the Persian Gulf, in which case we should, doubtless, though no stipulation to that effect exists in our own Loan Agreements, be justified in adopting similar measures in the south. It does not necessarily follow that a step of this kind on the part of Persia's foreign creditors would produce an immediate explosion of Mahommedan fanaticism against the Government of the Shah, though the chances are that it might do so, and that the two Governments might find themselves compelled to support their action by a show of force.

Although, however, the financial problem is the most pressing one with which Persia has to deal, it by no means exhausts her difficulties: it is essential for her that she should be able to reorganize her army, and thus acquire the means of enforcing within her territories a respect for the Shah's authority, which it has altogether ceased to command.

### *Condition of the Army.*

The so-called Persian army, which is by way of numbering 130,000 men, costs the country 500,000*l.* a-year; but is in reality an ill-armed and undisciplined mob, on which the Government is quite unable to rely. An opportunity occurred a year ago, on the death of the Commander-in-chief, a brother of the present Grand Vizier, for reorganizing this force, and rendering it efficient for the only purpose for which it can be employed, viz., the maintenance of internal order; and the Ain-ed-Dowleh was advised to disband a large portion of it, and to create out of the remainder a well-drilled and regularly-paid gendarmerie of say 50,000 men, garrisoning all the principal centres of Persia, and sufficiently mobile to be able to put down with rapidity any local or tribal rebellion. Had he followed this advice he could have economized a sufficient sum of money to extinguish the deficit, and could have furnished the Shah with an efficient military weapon in place of the worthless one which now constitutes so heavy a drain on his resources. He was not, however, able to resist the temptation of manipulating to his own use the large military budget, and all that he did was to put the Commandership-in-chief into Commission, and divide its emoluments and perquisites among twelve Sirdars, of whom he himself was one.

The army thus remains what it has been ever since the accession of Muzaffer-ed-din-Shah, a force existing mainly in order to provide large salaries for a number of Princes (some of them infants) and Royal favourites, who appropriate, in addition to these salaries, the pay and rations of the regiments which they are supposed to command, and many of which exist only upon paper.

It would take too long to illustrate in detail the deplorable condition of the army: guns and uniforms are supposed to be supplied to it, but the money set apart for this purpose goes into the pockets of the officers, from generals to subalterns. The troops are in rags, and when Lord Downe came to Tehran a few years ago to confer the Garter on the Shah, his military instincts were outraged by the spectacle of a sentry at the Palace, who, in the absence of a musket, presented arms to him with the broken leg of a table.

As a consequence of this state of things, extensive tracts forming part of the Shah's kingdom have been for some years past in a state of practical anarchy and rebellion. Throughout the Province of Luristan, across which an English Company has a concession for a commercial road, the authority of the Persian Government has altogether ceased to exist. The tribes have revolted against the extortion and oppression of the Shah's officials, and cannot be reduced to submission. Three years ago they stripped and disarmed a regiment of 800 Persian regulars which was marching through their country, and no steps to punish this outrage have yet been taken by the Court of Tehran. When, moreover, as occasionally happens, outbreaks against unpopular Governors take place in large cities, the troops are not only unable to repress them, but have sometimes taken the part of the rioters, and joined them in plundering the peaceful population. It may be regarded as almost certain that if a serious or general uprising against the Government of the Shah were to occur, the army would prove absolutely useless.

The only element in it which might do its duty is the so-called Cossack Brigade at Tehran, consisting, on paper, of about 1,500 men, under the command of a Russian Colonel, whose services are lent to Persia by the Czar. But this force, though regularly paid and well equipped and drilled, could not be counted on to obey its Russian officers in the event of disorders inspired by Mahommedan fanaticism.

### *The Clerical Party: its Relations with England and Turkey.*

A third element of weakness with which the Persian Government has to reckon, is to be found in the position, claims, and influence of the Shiah clergy; and this branch of Persian politics, which has not always received sufficient attention, is one deserving to be carefully watched and studied.

The Shiah, or Persian form of Mahommedanism, differs from the Sunni, not merely in that it teaches a different doctrine about the Caliphate, but in that—

1. It draws a sharp distinction between the spiritual and temporal powers not found in other Mahommedan States; and

2. Inculcates a belief in "Ijtihad," or continuous revelation, through the medium of the clergy, in opposition to the Sunni view, which is that revelation is now closed.



In Turkey, Morocco, and most Sunni countries, the temporal Sovereign is either the Caliph or, as in Egypt, the Caliph's deputy and representative, and is thus able to control the clergy and introduce reforms in the application of the theocratic Mahomedan Law, which are not always in harmony with its fundamental precepts.

According to the theory of the Shiahs, the Shah is a mere usurper, the heir of a soldier of fortune who seized the throne by force, and is regarded by the Ulema with feelings akin to those entertained for their Piedmontese Sovereign by the ultramontane clergy of Rome. The more orthodox Shiah divines even think it unlawful to offer public prayers for him as Sovereign. The legitimate Ruler of Persia is in their eyes the last of the twelve Imams, or hereditary successors of the Caliph Ali, who disappeared some 800 years ago in Mesopotamia, and is supposed by a miracle to be still living there in some unknown retreat till it shall please God to permit him to reappear as the Mahdi, whose reign is to precede the day of judgment. Pending this reappearance of the last Imam, his authority is assumed to be vested in the Heads of the Persian spirituality, and these alone are regarded by really pious Shiahs as the lawful leaders of the Faithful. Under strong Sovereigns these pretensions have not been and need not be taken too seriously; but under a weak Ruler, like the present Shah, they are a factor which cannot be ignored.

One great difficulty in dealing with them lies in the loose organization, or rather want of organization, of the Shiah Church, which combines with Papal pretensions a total lack of the discipline of the Papal system. There is no spiritual authority corresponding to the Pope, or even to a College of Cardinals or Bishops. The nearest resemblance to it is to be found in the pre-eminence enjoyed throughout the Shiah world by some four or five great Doctors of the Law living at the holy cities of Nejeff and Kerbela in Turkish Arabia, who are universally recognized as Mujtahids, *i.e.*, as men whose sanctity and religious learning invests them with the power of *Ijtihad*, or revelation of the Divine Will, and enables them to issue infallible commands to the Faithful. But although these great divines are the universally accepted leaders of the spirituality, there are in almost every large Persian city two or three Ulema, who also claim to be and are recognized by public opinion as Mujtahids, and who in that capacity are in constant conflict with the representatives of the civil power. The influence of these inferior Mujtahids is not an unmixed evil. They often champion the cause of the humbler classes against oppressive Governors, and their antagonism to the State makes them to some extent independent mouthpieces of national sentiment; but, on the other hand, they are determined opponents of all progress on modern lines, and the frequent advocates of intolerance and persecution in the case of Armenians, Jews, Rabis, and other dissenters from the orthodox faith, whilst many of them are personally rapacious and corrupt. Having no one recognized or unchallenged Head, the civil power is unable to conclude any binding Concordat with this hierarchy, and its helplessness in dealing with them is increased by the circumstance that the most powerful among them reside in Turkey, a country whose relations with Persia have in the past been very frequently unfriendly. It is almost impossible to draw a parallel between the Mujtahids and any force to be found in the religious history of Christendom. The nearest one that I can think of is the position of the Scotch clergy under the immediate successors of Knox, but for the analogy to be complete, it would be necessary to suppose that the Scotch Church in the days of Melville was governed, not by its own national synods, but by the dicta of the great Calvinistic doctors of Zurich and Geneva, and that these dicta, not only on religious, but also on secular questions, were regarded by the people of Scotland as overriding any laws merely enacted by the secular Government.

The influence of the Mujtahids has during the last ten or fifteen years, in proportion as the authority of the Shah has grown weaker, had important political effects. It was they who, instigated by Russia, overthrew the English Tobacco Régie, and compelled Nasr-ed-din Shah to cancel the monopoly he had given it, thus obliging him to pay it a large sum in compensation, which he had to borrow from the Imperial Bank of Persia, and thereby lay the foundation of Persia's present debt.

Under the present Shah, they have undoubtedly intimidated the Court, when there has been a question of sacrificing Persian interests in exchange for foreign financial assistance, though in the case of the Russian Loans of 1900 and 1902, and of the Tariff Revision, against which they have violently protested, their intervention has come too late to be effective.

In 1903, the chief Mujtahids at Nejeff issued a *Fetwah* excommunicating the Amin-es-Sultan, which would have rendered his position very difficult, even if it had not been undermined through other causes. They have carried on an agitation against the Belgian Customs Administration, which has been so far successful that M. Naus has left

Persia, nominally on a diplomatic Mission to Constantinople, from which it seems doubtful whether he will return. They are now in open opposition to the present Grand Vizier, who, unlike his predecessors, has been too avaricious to keep them in good temper by liberal presents. Last month they instigated a fanatical mob to destroy the newly-erected buildings of the Russian Bank at Tehran, and this demonstration is believed to be the prelude of a fresh campaign by them against the Government. Their power for good or evil is, to some extent, paralysed by the want of cohesion among them, and the intense personal jealousies which divide their leaders; but if any man of real capacity or statesman-like qualities were to arise at Nejeff, the great Shiah University in Turkey, who were to be recognized, like the late Mirza Hassan Ashtiyani, the destroyer of the Régie, as their undisputed head, it is conceivable that he might, in the present state of Persia, effect a revolution and even hurl the Shah from his throne.

The relations of the Mujtahids with the British Government and its representatives, if we except the episode of the Régie, have been on the whole very friendly, even in places like Isfahan and Shiraz where they come into conflict with our missionaries. A valuable lever in our possession is the so-called Oudh bequest, a fund left by the last King of Oudh for religious purposes at Kerbela and Nejeff, and administered under the supervision of the British Residency at Baghdad. This enables our Resident, as well as his Vice-Consul at Kerbela, who is always an Indian Shiah, to maintain close relations with the great doctors at Nejeff, Kerbela, Kazimain and Samara, whilst the clergy in Persia itself, who have always candidates for a share in these religious endowments, find it to their advantage to be on friendly terms with the British Legation at Tehran, in order that the Minister may say a good word for themselves or for their friends at Baghdad. When in the summer of 1903, just before the fall of the Amin-es-Sultan, the Persian clergy were stirring up fanatical outbreaks against that Minister and the new Tariff at Tabreez, Isfahan, and elsewhere, I offered to exert our influence with the principal Mujtahid at Nejeff on behalf of the Persian Government, and my offer was willingly accepted by the Amin-es-Sultan. It was indeed widely believed that His Majesty's Government were working the clergy in Turkish Arabia against the Russophile policy of the Grand Vizier, and although there was little foundation in fact for this belief, the suspicion that we might have recourse to such tactics in an extreme emergency, has acted within recent years as a wholesome deterrent on Persian statesmen.

I ought, perhaps, before leaving this special subject, to say something of the connection existing between the Mujtahids and the Sultan of Turkey, which has been steadily cultivated by the latter as part of his Pan-Islamic policy. It is remarkable that the old hatred and jealousy between Sunni and Shiah Mahomedans, though by no means a thing of the past, has of late considerably diminished, largely owing to the action of the Sultan, whose Ambassador at Tehran is in very close touch with the leaders of the clerical party, and who himself sends presents to the principal Persian Ulema, and is believed to employ one of the ablest among them as his secret political agent. On several occasions the Mujtahids have attempted to appeal to the Sultan from the Shah, and to invoke the assistance of Constantinople against measures, such as the Russian Loans or the employment of Belgians in the Persian Administration, which they deemed detrimental to Islam. Several of them have asked my advice as to a closer union between Persia and Turkey against the common enemy in the North, and I have been surprised to hear from Persian pulpits panegyrics, doubtless not very sincere, on the Sultan, who not so long ago would have been deemed, as the successor of Omar, only worthy of curses and execrations. Without attaching too much significance to these symptoms, it would, I think, be unwise in a student of the politics of Islam to disregard their existence altogether.

#### *Babism and other Anti-dynastic Elements.*

##### *Young Persia.*

Nor would it be right in estimating the spiritual forces at work in Persia, and their possible bearing upon her political future, not to touch, if only briefly, upon Babism. This late development, little more than half a century old, of Shiah Mahomedanism has now become a distinct religion, numbering large quantities of avowed and larger still of secret votaries in all ranks of Persian society. Its influence may be regarded as balancing, to some extent, that of the Mujtahids, to whom it is bitterly hostile. Indeed, I am inclined to think that its spread is due not so much to the attractions of a philosophy very congenial to the Persian mind, and more liberal and rational than

that of Islam, as to its protest against the greed and worldliness of the orthodox clergy.

A certain natural sympathy, which every European who examines it, will probably feel with Babism, whether in its Bzeli or Beha'i form, must not, however, blind its English student to the fact that the Babi movement, if it were successful, might disintegrate Persia, and that many of its leaders have been induced by the encouragement received by it from Russia to lean to some extent on that Power. There is no real reason why this should be so, indeed, the Chief of one of the two Babi sects lives in Cyprus under our protection, and draws, I believe, a small pension from us. I observed, the other day, a report in the press to the effect that the head of the rival or Beha'i community of Babis—Abbas Effendi—had been expelled from Acre by the Turks, and it occurred to me at the time that it might be a good move on our part to offer him hospitality in Egypt.

Politically speaking, both the Babi sects are unfriendly to the Kajar dynasty on account of the execution of the Bab and the cruel persecutions which followed it, but though they might join in a revolutionary movement they are not strong enough to initiate one on their own account. As it is, they are constantly exposed in the large cities of Persia to the danger of massacre or pillage at the hands of mobs instigated by bigoted or greedy Mullahs, and the Government is too weak or too indifferent to their interests to protect them. After the massacre of the Babis at Yezd, in the summer of 1903, I asked for compensation for the Babi employé of an English firm who had been tortured to death on a mere suspicion of heresy by fanatics, but was begged by the Persian Government as a special favour not to press the matter, the Shah being unwilling at that juncture to offend the clergy.

Distinct from, but sometimes blending with Babism, is the small revolutionary party founded by the late Seyyid Jemal-ud-Din, whose aim is to overthrow the Kajar dynasty and establish a kind of Republic. Some of the adherents of this party are Pan-Islamists, as was Jemal-ud-Din himself, in the sense that they advocate a rennion of all Moslems under an elected Chief or Council, others merely seek to realize in Persia the ideals of the "Young Turkey" school. Both these elements have hitherto been of little practical importance, but it seems possible that the ideas which they represent, however alien they may be to traditional Oriental conceptions, may become more widely diffused as the result of what is going on in Russia. The spectacle of the fall of the most powerful of autocracies is being watched with keen interest in Persia, not merely, I think, because of its possible effect on the future relations of the two countries, but also because of the feeling that what has taken place in Russia might take place in Persia likewise, and because with the overthrow of the autocratic power at St. Petersburg the Kajar dynasty really loses its most powerful temporary prop against an attack from within. These anti-dynastic groups are, on the whole, anti-Russian, as is generally speaking the larger, so-called Young Persian party, which, without desiring the fall of the dynasty, seeks its political ideals in the liberal west. The late Commander of the Cossack Brigade, Colonel Kosokofski, who knew Persia well, often told me that one of the most dangerous factors, from a Russian point of view, was "la jeune Perse," and though I am inclined to suspect that he exaggerated this danger, there is, I believe, a good deal to be said for his view. I am certainly of opinion that it is in our interest that the younger generation of Persians should learn French and become imbued with the spirit of Liberalism, and I have always from this point of view done my best to encourage the "Alliance Française," the Persian "École des Sciences Politiques," and other similar institutions existing at Tehran for the diffusion of western culture under the French form in which alone it has much chance of spreading in Persia.

I have endeavoured to describe in the above pages the various forces at work under the surface of Persian politics, whose action may help to break up the present régime, if it fails to reorganize its finances and its army. There is, however, one more element to be considered in such an eventuality, viz., the semi-independent tribes, who occupy a large portion of the south and west.

#### *The Tribes.*

Ever since the accession of Nasr-ed-din Shah and even before it the Court of Tehran has pursued a steadily centralizing policy, and has sought to sap or break the power of the old feudal and tribal Chiefs. In Khorassan, Seistan, and Baluchistan, as well as in the greater part of Fars, it has been almost completely successful, but in the more mountainous regions of the west the lack of an efficient army has prevented it

from really establishing its authority. The Kurds in western Azerbaijan, in Ardilan, and in Kurdistan proper, still yield only a nominal allegiance to the Shah; the anarchical condition of Luristan has already been mentioned; further south the Bakhtiari and the Arabs of the Karun Valley, of whom the Kāb tribe is the most powerful, have preserved a practical autonomy. With the two last-mentioned tribes, the Bakhtiari and the Kāb Arabs, the relations of the British Legation have been peculiarly close, though efforts to undermine them have been made of late years by Russian agents. The Bakhtiari Chiefs are largely guided in their dealings with the Tehran Government by the friendly advice of the British Consul-General at Ispahan, and they look to our support as well as to their own swords to protect their liberties against encroachments at the hands of Persian officials, and against the danger of absorption or conquest by Russia, when the break up of the Persian monarchy, which they believe to be not far distant, takes place.

Sheikh Khazal of Mohammerah, the present Chief of the Kāb Arabs, has received from us an assurance of protection, in case his sovereign should attempt to deprive him of the authority, which he now wields as a hereditary tribal Chief on the south-western frontier of Persia, and inasmuch as he can put some 10,000 or 15,000 fairly well-armed Arabs into the field, he is in no real danger of having his power shaken by the Persians, who could only attack Mohammerah from the side of the coast, and therefore only with the permission of our ships.

The increasing weakness and decay of the Persian State is not, I think, likely to affect the position of these semi-independent tribes and Chiefs, except in so far as it tends to discourage Tehran from embarking on any new attempt to render its authority over them more effective; but it is just possible that in the event of the collapse of the Persian Government, some of them would throw off their allegiance to the Shah, and that the Sheikh of Mohammerah in particular might attempt to acquire a position similar to the one now enjoyed by Sheikh Mubarek of Koweit.

It is also possible that these tribes might fight among themselves: just at present the relations between Sheikh Khazal and the Bakhtiari are somewhat strained, chiefly owing to the fault of the latter, and the Persian Government has constantly striven to make bad blood between them, with the object of using the Bakhtiari in order to help it to destroy the power of the Sheikhs of Mohammerah. I have always, I need hardly say, impressed both on the Sheikh and on the Bakhtiari Khans the extreme importance in their own interests of cordial relations with one another, and with the British Government as the common friend of both. But it is not too certain that wise counsels of this nature would prevail amidst the confusion and struggle of conflicting ambitions, which might attend an upheaval throughout Persia, following on the collapse of the Central Government.

#### *Probable Attitude of Russia and England in the event of a Dissolution of the Persian State.*

Assuming that such a collapse were to take place, the question next arises as to what would be the attitude of the two neighbouring Powers, Russia and Great Britain, both of whom are for different reasons deeply interested in the future of Persia. It appears to me evident that the Russian Government has long foreseen this eventuality and has shaped its policy in preparation for it. For many years it has done all it could to discourage any measures, which could contribute to the stability or progress of Persia. It has prevented the introduction of railways. It has encouraged the extravagance of the Shah by the facility with which it has granted loans, knowing that he would squander them, and has steadily declined any co-operation or even discussion with England as to the best means of preventing a financial breakdown. It has in fact counted on being able, if the Persian Government became bankrupt, and if as a consequence disturbances broke out through the country, to send a military force across the frontier and re-establish single-handed the authority of the Kajar dynasty, just as we did that of the Khedives in Egypt at the time of the Arabi rebellion. The effect of such a military intervention would, it doubtless foresaw, secure for Russia a position in Persia analogous to that obtained by Great Britain in Egypt, and the Shah, restored by Russian bayonets would become a mere puppet in the hands of a Russian Resident at Tehran.

His Majesty's Government, alive to this danger, decided, after full consideration of the question, that in the event of internal disturbances in Persia, the isolated action of Russia could not be acquiesced in, and that if, on whatever pretext, Russian troops were to enter Azerbaijan or Khorassan, a corresponding step should be taken by the Government of India in Seistan, or in the Persian Gulf, or in both. The occupation by British troops of Seistan, of Bunder Abbas, and of Bushire would not, in the plan contemplated

by them, have assumed the character of a demonstration against Russia. On the contrary it would have been plausibly represented to her as a measure of co-operation, both powers interfering simultaneously, and if Russia were willing, in concert, to defend their respective interests and maintain order in the regions adjacent to their respective frontiers, in view of the inability of the Persian Government to protect them adequately itself. Inasmuch as one of the great objects of Russian policy is to penetrate to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean after gradually converting Persia into a Russian Egypt, it is obvious that a British occupation of either Seistan, lying as it does across the only route from Meshed to the Indian Seas, or of the principal ports of southern Persia, would defeat that object, and would compel the Russian Government to discuss the Persian question with England, and submit to its solution by some compromise acceptable to her.

Although the Russian Government has not been directly informed of this intention on our part, it is probably well aware of its existence, for I was authorized to state to the Amin-es-Sultan in the summer of 1903, when there was talk of a Russian intervention to suppress revolutionary disturbances at Tabreez that any entry of Russian troops into Persian territory for such a purpose would oblige us to take identical measures in the south and east, and I am pretty certain that this information was communicated to the Russian Legation. A similar communication was made by me to the Ain-ed-Dowleh, when that Minister assumed office a few months later, and I cannot but suspect that the conviction entertained at St. Petersburg that we should not permit Russia, in the event of a rebellion or civil war in Persia, to pacify the country single-handed, may have combined with other considerations to determine the overtures made by Count Benckendorff to your predecessor just before the outbreak of the Japanese war for some *modus vivendi* as regards the Middle-Eastern question.

#### *Possible Anglo-Russian Understanding.*

The war in the Far East put an end to the exchange of views between the Russian and the British Governments on this question before it had got beyond the academic stage, but with the conclusion of peace, the possibility of some such understanding has again been tentatively discussed, and His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg informed me a few weeks ago that, whilst he deemed it unwise for us to display any eagerness to effect a settlement, and thought that the time had hardly yet come for it, he did not believe that it need in itself present any very great difficulties.

My own view has always been that the only basis on which such a settlement could be effected would be not a partition of Persia into rival spheres of influence, which would mean sooner or later an English Protectorate over the south and the definite abandonment of Russia's aspirations to reach the open ocean, and would therefore be unacceptable to her, but a suspension of the diplomatic conflict which has so long raged between the two Powers at Tehran, and an understanding on the lines of the Austro-Russian Agreement respecting the Balkan Peninsula that both should combine to preserve the existence of Persia as a neutral State, by imposing on the Shah such a simple scheme of financial and administrative reform as would avert or at least for the present delay the dissolution of the Persian Monarchy.

In the present condition of Russia any serious negotiations for the attainment of this object are obviously difficult, and could only be entered upon when some more stable Russian Government has been evolved out of the existing chaos. But, although the internal situation in Persia is growing rapidly worse, some years appear likely to elapse before an active intervention on the part of her neighbours becomes inevitable, so that there is still time for careful consideration of the best methods for dealing with the crisis when it actually arrives. Some persons believe that the death of the Shah and the accession of the Valiahd, who is stronger and a good deal more avaricious, might at the last moment avert it. Personally speaking, I feel little confidence in the capacity of any Prince of the Kajar Dynasty to carry through unaided the radical reform essential if the country is to be set on its feet again. This Dynasty, as always happens after a few generations in the Mahomedan East, with the single exception of Turkey (an exception due, in my belief, to the peculiar marriage customs of the house of Osman), has become degenerate and effete, and commands neither affection nor respect in any large section of the Persian population. It would, in fact, in all probability have been overthrown before this, like those of the Zend, of Nadir Shah, and of the Sefawis, but for the knowledge that any insurrection against its authority would bring about the armed intervention of Russia or Great Britain, or both, for the preservation of the *status quo* in Persia.

I have tried in the foregoing pages to indicate as clearly as possible the outlines of the Persian political situation in its bearing on the internal condition and foreign relations of the country. I now proceed to deal with concrete British interests, chiefly commercial, in the Shah's dominions.

#### *British Trade with Persia: the New Tariff.*

The annexed statement of statistics (Appendix B), compiled for last year by the Belgian Customs Department at Tehran, will show that the British Empire occupies the second place among the countries trading with Persia, but that, although Persia's exports to Great Britain, India, and other British possessions are much smaller than her exports to Russia, British imports into Persia do not fall far below those of Russia.

Up to 1903 British goods entering Persia and Persian goods exported to the British Empire paid a duty of 5 per cent. *ad valorem* in accordance with the most-favoured-nation clause in the Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1854. This 5 per cent. *ad valorem* duty was fixed by the Treaty of Turkomanchai (1828) between Russia and Persia, and could not therefore be increased by Persia without the consent of the Russian Government. It is much to be regretted that, when, after our war with Persia, we concluded the Treaty of Paris, we did not insert a similar stipulation instead of being content with the mere most-favoured-nation clause. The result of this omission was that when in 1901 the Persian Government decided to increase its revenue by raising its Customs duties, it had only to deal with Russia and Turkey, and was legally free to impose upon our commerce any Tariff which it could get those two Powers to accept. We had, no doubt, a moral right, in view of our peculiar relations with Persia, and the volume of our trade with her, to be consulted in the matter, and we were so consulted to some extent, and so far as the Russian Government would allow it. We were able, in fact, to obtain a reduction of the very high duty which the new Tariff originally contemplated on tea, and to which grave exception was taken by the Government of India. But it was obvious from the first that the Russian Government, which was the real master of the situation, would only accept a rearrangement of the duties such as was desired by Persia, on condition that it should be favourable to those articles in which Russian trade was chiefly interested and that the increased taxation should be furnished by imports from countries other than Russia, such as silks, wines, and brandies, which come chiefly from France, teas and indigo from India, and numerous classes of manufactured articles produced chiefly in Germany and Austria.

It so happened that our principal imports, such as prints, piece-goods, &c., belonged to the same class as the chief imports of Russia, and as the Persian Government could not formally differentiate between the products of the various countries with which it had Treaties, these classes of English goods benefited by the favourable treatment accorded to similar imports from Russia. When, therefore, I sent home, a year before it was to come into operation, the new Tariff which the Persian Government proposed to introduce as the result of its negotiations with Russia, the Board of Trade was of opinion that it would not prove so injurious to British commercial interests as to justify the adoption of any violent or far-fetched measures, such as, *e.g.*, a refusal to submit to it on the technical ground that, although accepted by Turkey, it had not been accepted by Egypt, which could still claim for her goods the treatment of the old Turco-Persian Conventions, or the organization under our auspices of a movement by the clergy and commercial classes in Persia itself against it.

Accordingly, though the Government of India considered it detrimental to Indian interests, I was instructed to offer to accept it, on condition that the Persian Government concluded with us an identical Treaty which would give us the legal right, not hitherto enjoyed by us, to prevent Persia from increasing at any future time the duties specified in it without first obtaining our consent. That she might do this to provide the security for fresh Russian loans was by no means an unlikely danger. On these lines I concluded the Anglo-Persian Convention of February 1903, which, whilst applying the new Tariff to English imports, gave us a control over all future Tariff revision, and established in commercial and Customs matters a species of Anglo-Russian condominium.

Up to the present the effects of the new Tariff do not appear to have been felt to any appreciable extent by English trade; the import of tea from India having increased, notwithstanding the higher duty, and I am disposed to think that the disproportionate increase in Russian imports previous to the outbreak of the Japanese



war is due partly to the activity of the Russian Bank, which finances on favourable terms and otherwise assists Persian merchants trading exclusively with Russia, and partly to the bounties given by the Russian Government to Russian firms dealing with Persia, and to the subsidies accorded for political motives to Russian steamers trading with the Persian Gulf, which run—even with this assistance—at a loss. A certain impetus seems likely to be given to Russian trade by the decision of the Russian Government to inaugurate on the roads worked by Russian Companies in Northern Persia a service of motor-cars for Russian goods, in the hope that by this means Russia may capture the markets of Central Persia in which England still competes with her, and the best means by which this danger can be combated were receiving, when I left Persia in September last, the anxious consideration of the British and Indian Governments.

This last question leads, by a natural transition, to that of the road and other Concessions held by British Companies in Persia.

#### *British Road Concessions in Persia.*

Many years ago, the Imperial Bank of Persia obtained permission to construct and levy tolls on a road from Tehran to Koom, Sultanabad, and Ahwaz, on the Karun, with a branch from Koom to Isfahan. The first section of this road, that from Tehran to Koom was, however, the only one which the bank really made, and in 1902 it determined to resell it to the Persian Government on the ground that the expenditure involved in its maintenance was unauthorized by the terms of its Charter.

In view of the danger that this road, the main artery of communication with the south, might eventually pass into Russian hands, His Majesty's Government intervened and effected an arrangement, by which the Imperial Bank's Road Concessions were transferred to the so-called "Persian Transport Company," a leading member of which, Mr. Henry Lynch, of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, was largely interested in the navigation of the Karun, and had a practical monopoly of the steamers running between Ahwaz and Mohammerah.

This Company is now busied with the prolongation of the road from Koom to Isfahan, and has already completed that from Koom to Sultanabad. The extension of the road beyond Sultanabad is, in consequence of the anarchy prevailing in Luristan, not at present practicable and communications between Ahwaz and Central Persia have been maintained by what is known as the Bakhtiari road, a caravan track constructed some years ago by Messrs. Lynch, Brothers, with the assistance of the Bakhtiari Khans from Ahwaz to Isfahan.

This track traverses a very rugged and difficult country and is not practicable for wheeled traffic; it is, moreover, closed by snow during several of the winter months. It has, however, several good bridges over rivers traversed by it, and is steadily competing as a trade route from the Persian Gulf with the more ordinary route from Bushire across the province of Fars, the southernmost or Bushire-Shiraz section of which is exceedingly bad, rising as it does from the coast to the Central Persian plateau over a series of most precipitous mountain ridges and defiles called *kotels*.

Tolls are levied on the Ahwaz-Isfahan road by its "cessionnaires" the Bakhtiari Khans and their revenue from this source is increasing every year. As their right to levy these tolls has been to some extent guaranteed by the British Legation which interested itself in the construction of the road undertaken as it was by a British subject, and as the differences in the interpretation of the Agreements between the Khans and Mr. Lynch have been constantly referred to and settled by us, the Bakhtiari road is generally regarded in Persia as an English concern, and it is certainly valuable at the present as forming a link between the Karun River navigated as described above by Messrs. Lynch's steamers, and the Isfahan-Tehran road worked by the British "Transport Company." It may, indeed, be said that the entire route from the mouth of the Euphrates to the capital of Persia is in this way directly or indirectly under British control.

#### *Karun Navigation.*

It cannot be alleged that the opening of the lower Karun to foreign navigation has been attended with the brilliant results hoped for when it was first sanctioned by the late Shah. Messrs. Lynch, who practically monopolize it, complain that their service of

steamers does not pay them, and that they can only afford to run them as a branch of their more lucrative traffic on the Tigris and Euphrates. This is largely due to the vexatious and short-sighted policy of the Persian Government, which, in its jealousy of foreign enterprise, and its suspicion that such enterprise is a cloak for political designs, does everything in its power to obstruct it. An unfailing means to this end is supplied by the system of embargoes on wheat and other agricultural produce.

The recent Commercial Conventions with Great Britain and Russia provide for the free export of goods of every description, but allow the Persian Government to restrict it when such restriction is necessitated "par les besoins de l'alimentation publique." This exceptional provision has now been made by the Persian Government the rule, and the free export of grain an exception, on the pretext of preventing famines, but really because the provincial Governors find it convenient to be bribed in order to allow the smuggling of grain out of their districts. The Central Government is fully aware of this, but it fears to prohibit these embargoes lest the provincial authorities should make the pretended existence of scarcity resulting from an excessive export of grain a pretext for not paying their taxes. Repeated representations have been made on this subject by His Majesty's Legation, but so far only with partial success. We have, however, obtained from the Persian Government a sort of promise that embargoes will not suddenly be imposed without notification to the Legation, thus guarding against the danger that large quantities of grain actually purchased and paid for by British traders should not be allowed to be exported unless the exporters are prepared to pay an amount of blackmail to the authorities of a nature to swallow up their profits.

#### *Other British Interests: the Telegraphs, Bank, &c.*

The remaining British interests in Persia are:—

(i.) The two Telegraph Administrations, viz., the Indo-European Company, which works the telegraph line from Julfa, on the Russian frontier, through Tabreez and Tehran; and the Indo-European Telegraph Department of the Government of India, which works—

- (a.) The line from Tehran to Bushire;
- (b.) The submarine cable from Bushire to Jask;
- (c.) The line along the coast from Jask to Kurrachee; and
- (d.) The overland line lately constructed from Tehran to Quetta, via Yezd and Kerman.

With respect to the Indo-European Telegraph Department, I would take the opportunity of mentioning one point, which I think worthy of notice: under the various Telegraph Conventions concluded by us with Persia, we pay the Shah certain royalties out of the revenue realized by us from these lines. The Jask royalty, for example, is about 600*l.* per annum, and a still larger sum will probably be forthcoming when the new Central Persian line is in regular working order. A threat to suspend for a time the payment of these royalties has sometimes proved an efficacious means of inducing the Persian Government to settle claims, or to abandon an obstructive attitude to them, where other means of persuasion have failed.

(ii.) *The Imperial Bank of Persia.*—This Bank is on the whole the most important and valuable British institution in the Shah's dominions. It was founded in 1889 in virtue of a Persian concession and a British charter. Its capital paid up was 1,000,000*l.*, subsequently reduced by the writing-off of losses, principally in exchange and silver, to 650,000*l.* By the terms of the charter there is a liability in case of insolvency equal to the paid-up capital. This capital may be increased to 3,000,000*l.* Bank-notes may be issued in Persia to the extent of the paid-up capital, guaranteed by a metallic reserve of 33 per cent. The present amount of the note issue varies from 250,000*l.* to 300,000*l.*, four-fifths of which is in Tehran alone. Advances to the Government may not exceed one-third of the paid-up capital. The majority of the Board has to be of British nationality.

#### *Operations of the Bank.—The Bank—*

- (a.) Issues notes;
- (b.) Takes deposits and discounts bills;
- (c.) Buys and sells foreign exchange and imports silver for coinage;
- (d.) Makes advances to the Government;
- (e.) Makes advances to private individuals.

The results of the working of the Bank have been satisfactory excepting the heavy silver loss in 1895, and its position is sound in every respect.

The profits have been, for the first twelve years of its existence—

Year.						Amount.		
						£	s.	d.
September	1890	..	..	..	..	67,863	16	5
"	1891	..	..	..	..	47,771	13	3
"	1892	..	..	..	..	71,020	3	2
"	1893	..	..	..	..	38,798	1	5
"	1894	..	..	..	..	29,318	13	10
"	1895	..	..	..	..	29,275	6	11
"	1896	..	..	..	..	46,220	14	9
"	1897	..	..	..	..	41,773	11	7
"	1898	..	..	..	..	39,266	11	7
"	1899	..	..	..	..	40,661	13	10
"	1900	..	..	..	..	53,147	5	2
"	1901	..	..	..	..	44,461	14	5
"	1902	..	..	..	..	56,679	11	1

Of these profits—

75 per cent. are made in Tehran, which holds about one-third of the capital.

14 per cent. are made at Persian branches,

11 per cent. in London, which has one-half of the capital and all the reserves.

The fact of so large a portion of the capital and the totality of the reserves being retained in London is a strong feature.

The important points in the working of the Bank, from a political point of view, are as follows:—

(a.) The issue of notes, by which it practically controls the currency in Tehran and some other places.

(b.) The advances to the Government. These, politically, are of very great value, the most effective action that can be exercised over the Persian Government being through the purse. Since the Russian Loan Contract of 1901, when all Government debts to the bank were paid off, they have amounted to nearly 300,000l.

(c.) Advances to private individuals. These advances, which are frequently made to high personages about the Court, Provincial Governors, &c., although having no security beyond the signatures of the borrowers and their guarantors, have, during an experience of more than fourteen years, proved to be sound, and, being generally granted with a good deal of caution, have so far occasioned no losses. It need scarcely be added that they give a considerable hold over influential dignitaries and Ministers. The result of these loans to individuals has been to reduce the rate of interest from 24 per cent. and 18 per cent., the charge of native bankers, to 12 per cent., below which it is difficult to work on account of the heavy exchange risk due to the enormous fluctuations in the price of silver in London. Interest is allowed on deposits at 6 per cent., and in some cases higher. Native and Armenian bankers allow interest at 12 per cent. in account current.

The bank has served a most useful political purpose, as the Agency through which the Persian Government has been enabled to accept loans from Great Britain, without too flagrant a violation of the letter of the Russian Loan Contracts, and has thus succeeded in neutralizing the great danger arising out of those Agreements, namely, the acquisition by Russia of the sole right to grant supply to the Shah, and thus dominate a corrupt and spendthrift Government.

It has also made advances itself up to nearly 300,000l. to the Persian Government, and could probably lend a good deal more with advantage to itself but for an unfortunate provision in its concession, which precludes it from lending to the Persian State more than one-third of its total paid-up capital.

Just before the fall of the Amin-es-Sultan I urged, with that Minister's approval, on His Majesty's Government the expediency of taking steps to modify this clause; but the Directors of the Imperial Bank, on being sounded by Lord Lansdowne, did not view the proposal with favour. Another recommendation which I made that the British Government should purchase a sufficiency of shares in the Bank to be able to control its

policy and apply the funds, when necessary, for the furtherance of our political objects in Persia, much as the late Earl of Beaconsfield purchased the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal, was deemed at the time impracticable in London but was much less unfavourably viewed at Calcutta. I merely mention it here now as it is conceivable that the question may again arise, if any extensive expenditure should become necessary in order to meet Russia's new commercial schemes. The Russian Bank (Banque d'Escompte de Perse), which has no private shareholders, and is in reality a Department of the Russian Treasury, working far more for political than for commercial objects, is placed at a great advantage as compared with its English rival by the greater freedom of action, which its close connection with, and exclusive control by, the State confers upon it.

Except for the issue of notes—which is the monopoly of the English Bank—the business of the Banque d'Escompte de Perse is similar to that of the Imperial, but its sole shareholder is the Russian Government, and its loans, as distinct from its advances on current account, are provided either by the Russian Treasury or the Emperor's Privy Purse.

It, however, does pawnbroking business and trades in Russian goods, the latter so successfully, owing to its Government backing, that it is fast driving all other traders in them, even Russians, out of the field.

To native traders who import only Russian goods, the Banque d'Escompte makes advances below 12 per cent., viz., 10 per cent., and sometimes 9 per cent., but its charges for small loans or pledges are generally a good deal higher than those of the Imperial Bank.

(iii.) *The Oil Concession: General Difficulties in the way of Trade.*—This concession, whose holders have the exclusive right to work the oil-fields throughout Persia with the exception of those in the Provinces of Azerbaijan, Ghilan, Mazanderan, and Khorassan, has recently been transferred to the Burmah Oil Corporation, who have undertaken to develop the Persian oil-fields, provided the existence of oil in commercial quantities can be proved, as alleged by the engineers and other experts by whom they have been examined.

Considerable success has attended the efforts made by Mr. D'Arcy, the first holder of the concession, near Kasri-Shireen, in the Province of Kermanshah; but the hopes of those interested in the enterprise centre in the fields further to the south, lying chiefly in Arabistan, and at Dalleki, a day's journey north-east of Bushire, as it would be easy, at so short a distance from the coast or the Karun River, to convey oil in pipelines without running the risk that these might be destroyed or interfered with (as would probably happen in the Kermanshah Province) by the rough tribes through whose country they must pass for many miles.

It is as yet too early to hazard an opinion as to whether this oil enterprise will be crowned with success. Its promoters are very sanguine, but they have perhaps inadequately appreciated the difficulties attending all commercial undertakings in a country possessing no regular or efficient administration, whose authorities' one idea in relation to commerce is to levy blackmail on it for their own personal and immediate profit.

In this connection it must not be forgotten that no regular system of Tribunals or justice can be said to exist in Persia, and that the legal claims of British merchants have invariably to be supported by Consular and in the last resource by diplomatic pressure. The only judicial authority open to foreigners who have suits against Persians, is the Court of the Karguzar or Foreign Office Agent, to be found in every city of importance where foreign traders or foreign Consuls reside.

These Karguzars, who buy their posts mainly as a commercial speculation from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and receive their instructions from him, are, in the great majority of cases, as corrupt as most Persian officials, and their inclination to favour those of their own countrymen, who are prepared to pay them liberally for settling their cases against foreigners, is only tempered by a fear of the Consuls of Great Britain and Russia, and by the hope that one or the other of these Powers may obtain their promotion, if they show themselves sufficiently subservient to its interests. As they are judicial not executive authorities, and are, moreover, almost always on bad terms with the local Governor, on whose perquisites their presence infringes, the latter usually objects to executing their decisions in favour of the foreign resident, who has succeeded in obtaining them, and insists on referring them to Tehran, with the result that the unfortunate foreign claimant has to wait months and sometimes even years before he can get satisfaction. At Tehran itself these mixed cases are decided by the so-called Foreign Office Tribunal, or Mejlis-i-Muhakimat, whose President is

named by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and which, being under the eye of the Legations, is slightly less unsatisfactory than the Karguzar's Courts. For some time past the Persian Government, at the suggestion of its Belgian Legal Adviser, has contemplated some sort of codification of the law, and organization of the Courts, dealing with mixed cases, and a scheme was actually elaborated last year providing for a regular gradation of original and Appellate Tribunals, which were to decide mixed suits by the application of a fairly simple commercial code, based on that now existing in Turkey. The plan, which was deserving of sympathy, was frustrated partly by the opposition of the clergy, who claimed that the spiritual, and not the temporal authority, was the only one competent to legislate in a matter of this kind, and that such legislation must be in strict accordance with the "Shara," a condition fatal to the equality before the law of Christian and Moslem suitors; and partly by that of Russia, always hostile to any measure likely to make for progress in Persia. The Russian Legation took its stand on an antiquated clause in the Treaty of Turkomanchai, providing for the hearing of mixed cases "in the Shah's Defters at Tehran and Tabreez," and contended that the new scheme for an Appellate Court with independent Judges for the whole of Persia, was tantamount to an abrogation of this provision, and, consequently, *ultra vires*. In spite, therefore, of the loud and constant complaints of British merchants (those at Bushire addressed me on the subject when I was in the Gulf in 1903), there seems no prospect that any decent tribunals, or system of judicial reform, even of the kind existing in Turkey, will be established in Persia, and, until this is done, the future of any foreign commercial enterprise, not vigorously supported by the Government of the country to which its promoters belong, must always be somewhat precarious. I have thought it my duty to give warnings in this sense to capitalists, who, like Mr. Warner, of the Standard Trust Company, have contemplated investing money in the establishment of water-works and cloth factories in Persia, as well as to Mr. D'Arcy, who is thinking of obtaining a concession for the working of copper mines in the province of Kerman. It should be added that the present reactionary Grand Vizier is exceedingly averse to granting concessions to foreigners of any nationality, though on the other hand his xenophobia is less intense than his love of money, and would probably yield, in any given case, to a sufficiently heavy bribe.

I propose to close this review with a few remarks on the present position of the railway question in Persia.

#### *Railway Question.*

It will be remembered that in 1889 an Agreement was concluded between the Amin-es-Sultan and the then Russian Minister, M. de Butzow, which prohibited the Persian Government from constructing or allowing the construction of any railways in Persia for a period of ten years, without the permission of the Czar. This prohibition was not to be held to preclude the construction of a line from Tehran to the Shah's Summer Palaces in the neighbouring hills, or that of tramway lines in, or close to, cities. A short line had, in fact, actually been made before the conclusion of this arrangement between Tehran and the shrine of Shah-Abdul-Azim, a place of pilgrimage some six miles distant on the road to Koom and the south, and this line, worked by a Belgian Company, remains the sole railway in Persia, the only other one, a few miles in length, made by a Persian merchant, from Amol in Mazandaran to the Caspian, having been allowed to fall into decay. The result of this agreement was to prevent, so long as it lasted, the construction of any railway by any one; for although it did not formally prohibit the Persian Government from allowing the Russians to build a railway, it did so in effect, inasmuch as Nasr-ed-din Shah had given an engagement to England, the binding force of which had been admitted by his successor, that if ever Russia were permitted to construct any railways in Persia, he would allow an English Company also to build one from Tehran to the southern coast of his dominions. This pledge given to Russia in 1889, was renewed, as already stated, in 1899, as one of the conditions of the first Russian Loan; but some doubt appears to exist whether it was for five or ten years longer, and it has been found impossible by His Majesty's Legation to obtain from the Persian Government an authentic copy of its actual wording in the form in which it was actually renewed.

I believe, almost incredible as it may seem, that the only document on the subject is in the hands of the Russian Government, and consists of a Dast-hât, or autograph, by the Shah, scrawled across a Memorandum by Count Mouravieff. This Memorandum enumerates three conditions, which Russia attaches to her Loan:—

1. The renewal of the Railway Agreement of 1889 for ten years.

2. The promise that Persia will contract no foreign loan till the repayment of the Russian Loan.

3. An undertaking to affect the payment of the Russian Loan, and to pay into the Russian Bank for the purpose the *entire* revenues of the Persian monarchy.

On the Memorandum the Shah wrote that he agreed to all the conditions except the last, which he considered excessive, and would only mortgage the Customs. I further believe that the Amin-es-Sultan and the Shah concealed from the other Ministers the renewal of the Railway Agreement for ten years under the impression that, if it got out, it would render the Amin unpopular, and deliberately allowed it to be believed, as it is by most persons, that the new term was for five years only.

Whether, when it expires, it will be renewed for a third period, will depend chiefly on the state of Persia's relations with Russia at the time. The Agreement is, of course, disliked and regarded as humiliating by all progressive Persians, but the Shah and his more conservative Ministers are not entirely averse to it, as they believe that the construction of railways, whether Russian or English, would afford pretexts for increased foreign intervention in their affairs, and would render them more assailable by foreign armies. They fully realize that these railways could not be made either by the Persian State, or by private Persian capitalists, and that, inasmuch as with the exception of a line connecting Tehran with Bagdad, they would probably not pay, they would only be constructed for political purposes, and therefore on political lines. They are also aware that the new Russian road from Julfa to Tabreez and Tehran is being built by the Russian Government in such a way as to admit of its being turned at a very short notice into a railway.

From our own point of view, we need not, I think, be eager to hasten the advent of the railway era in Persia. Different views will, no doubt, be taken of this question, according as we assign the chief importance to commercial or to military considerations. The opening of Persia to railways would undoubtedly be most advantageous to our trade, and might enable us to recapture many markets in the northern and central parts of the country, from which we have been driven by Russia, or in which we are feebly struggling to compete with her. On the other hand, it would mean sooner or later the linking up of the Russian and Indian railway systems, and, even without that, it would give Russia a very great advantage in any offensive operations which she might undertake against us or against Afghanistan, through Persia.

I have now completed, however imperfectly, my survey of the Persian political situation, and of the principal questions affecting British interests connected with it. I append to this survey, for convenience of reference:—

1. A statement showing the liabilities of Persia to Russian and English creditors, and their relation to her revenues; and
2. Figures showing the imports from and exports to the various foreign countries, trading with the Shah's Empire, both of which may, I think, be found useful for convenience of reference.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) ARTHUR H. HARDINGE

#### APPENDIX (A).

##### *Persian Finances.*

AS no budget is published by the Persian Government, any figures given can only be regarded as approximate. The revenue of Persia is roughly 1,425,000*l.* and is made up as follows:—

Item.	Amount.
	£
Customs, after deducting administration expenses ... ..	440,000
"Maliat," or land tax ... ..	800,000
Post and Telegraphs ... ..	15,000
Royalties on Caspian fisheries ... ..	20,000
Passports ... ..	50,000
Crown domains ... ..	50,000
Mint, concessions, and miscellaneous revenue ... ..	50,000
<b>Total ... ..</b>	<b>1,425,000</b>



The expenditure is about 1,700,000*l.*, viz. :—

Item.	Amount.
	£
Service of Debts...	266,000
Diplomatic and Consular Service, and Foreign Office	46,000
Shah and members of Kajar tribe	164,800
Provincial administration (including part of payments to army)	700,000
Military Budget (not paid out of provincial revenue)	300,000
Cossack Brigade	43,200
Pensions...	180,000
Total	1,700,000

Of the "Maliat," or land revenue, estimated at from 700,000*l.* to 800,000*l.*, very little reaches the Imperial Treasury, but many of the employés of the Central Government are paid out of drafts on the provincial treasuries, and much of the land revenue covers local expenditure. The Customs brought in last year a revenue of 440,000*l.*, and M. Naus hopes that when the new tariff is regularly in force, which will take some little time, and when Russian trade has recovered from the effects of the war, and of the present revolutionary troubles that the revenue will rise to 500,000*l.*

Of the 440,000*l.* derived from the Customs, the northern Customs, including in this term those of the western and eastern frontiers, contribute about 260,000*l.* and the southern about 180,000*l.* a-year.

These revenues are charged with this payment of the interest and sinking fund of the two Russian loans (of 3,200,000*l.*), representing an annual payment of 176,000*l.*, with the payment of 36,000*l.* per annum, representing the interest on the advances made at 12 per cent. in April 1901, and at various later dates by the Imperial Bank of Persia, and with a portion of the interest on the advances of 300,000*l.* (i.e., 24,000*l.*) made by His Majesty's Government in April 1903 and September 1904, which, though nominally also secured on the Caspian Fisheries and the Posts will, as a matter of practical convenience, be entirely paid out of the Customs receipts, and with interest at 12 per cent. on advances, believed to equal about 170,000*l.* made on account current by the Banque d'Escompte (20,400*l.*).

The total annual charge on account of loans on the Customs of Persia is, therefore, roughly speaking, 256,000*l.* out of a total estimated revenue of 440,000*l.*, of which 196,000*l.* are paid to Russia, and 60,000*l.* to British creditors.

There is, therefore, room for another loan at 5 per cent. of about 2,000,000*l.* on the northern, and of about 3,200,000*l.* interest and sinking fund on the southern Customs.

In practice, however, such large loans as those indicated above cannot safely be raised by the Persian Government. Its annual expenditure, including the charges on the loans, has almost always exceeded its receipts, since the accession of the present Shah, by 200,000*l.* to 300,000*l.*, and if it is to attempt to balance its budget by reducing its expenses, and reforming the "Maliat," and is to continue paying the interest on existing debts (failing which Russia forecloses on the northern Customs) it cannot venture to contract any further loan, bearing interest of more than 80,000*l.*, viz., one of about 1,500,000*l.*, or if the Customs increase by another 100,000*l.* of 2,000,000*l.*

Even this would be most dangerous unless the money were employed remuneratively, i.e., in order to provide a sufficient force to crush resistance to increased taxation, and to the abolition of ruinous abuses.

In connection with the above-described pecuniary liabilities, the Persian Government has entered into certain political engagements towards Russia and Great Britain respectively, which, although recapitulated above, may be usefully restated for reference.

#### 1. Engagements towards Russia.

The Persian Government has bound itself towards Russia :—

(a.) To give the Russian Bank, in case of default, supervision, and if this is insufficient to ensure regular payment of the interest due on the loans, control of the Customs pledged as security for them, i.e., all the Customs of Persia save those of Fars and the Persian Gulf.

(b.) Not to redeem the loan of 1901 till 1910, and not to redeem the loan of 1903 till 1912, giving six months' notice in each case.

(c.) Till the loans are repaid or redeemed to "issue no foreign loan" (contract of 1901) and to "contract no foreign loan for a long term" (contract of 1902) without the consent of the Russian Government.

The Russians interpret this as meaning that although Persia is free to accept advances from the Imperial Bank, which is in a sense her State Bank, and with which her Government has an account current, or to discount royalties, such as those due on the Caspian Fisheries Concession, the Darcy Petroleum Concession, and the Telegraph Lines, worked by the Indo-European Company and the Indo-European Department, she cannot stipulate or accept a stipulation that her advances made to her should only be redeemable "à longue échéance."

The expression "longue échéance" has not been precisely defined, but I suppose it might be

reasonably contended that a term of twenty years, or even ten, would constitute "longue échéance," but that one of five would be "courte échéance." The Persian Government has, however, disregarded this consideration in its recent Agreements with us, it having been stipulated in the Arrangement of September 1904, that the sum of 300,000*l.* lent by His Majesty's Government out of Indian revenues should be repaid in fixed annual instalments in twenty years.

(d.) Persia has further undertaken, till the Russian loan is repaid, not to lower her duties without the consent of Russia, and this engagement has now been made independent of the repayment of the loan by its incorporation in a secret Article attached to the new Russo-Persian Treaty.

#### 2. Engagements towards Great Britain.

In 1897, under instructions from Lord Salisbury, Sir Charles Hardinge, then Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, requested in a note, to which a Memorandum was annexed, an assurance from the Persian Government that under no circumstances whatever would the control of the Customs of Southern Persia be ceded to a foreign Power.

The Memorandum annexed to this note pointed out that it would be a grave error of policy to pledge to foreign financiers the Customs revenues of the southern Persian ports.

It added that Great Britain would protest against the alienation to a foreign Power of the Shah's control over the Customs of his southern ports—an expression which was altered in the Persian text of the Memorandum "to control over the revenues of the Customs of Southern Persia." The then Mushir-ed-Dowleh on the 23rd October, 1897, replied to this note in a communication, of which the English translation in our archives runs as follows :—

"You have written that there was a rumour that the Customs of Southern Persia would be placed under foreign 'supervision' and control as a guarantee for a loan, I therefore take this occasion of informing the Legation that this rumour is absolutely without foundation and that they will never be placed under foreign supervision or control."

The Persian text of this assurance is a little less precise, but the pledge contained in it debarred the Persian Government from pledging the Customs of the south to Russia in 1900, and they were expressly excluded in the loan contract of that year under the term "Customs of Fars and the Persian Gulf." A good deal of discussion has taken place as to the exact meaning of this term, which, the Russians argue, does not include Mohammerah, a river port not in Fars and not situated on the actual shores of the gulf, or the ports from Jask to Guetter inclusive, which are not on the sea called the Persian Gulf, but on the Indian Ocean outside it.

It has been very difficult to extract from the Persian Government any definition of the sense, in which it used the term, but after very great pressure it was prevailed upon, in 1904, to declare that it had meant the term to cover all the southern ports, but could not undertake that the same meaning would be attached to it by the Russians as the other contracting party. It was, therefore, informed that His Majesty's Government took note of this statement as to the intention with which Persia had used the expression, and would enforce respect for the assurance given in 1897 should any attempt be made to disregard it. A few weeks ago, in connection with recent negotiations for a fresh English loan, the Persian Government declared its willingness to construe the term without qualification in the sense desired by England. It should be noted in this connection that the "Règlement Douanier" formally accepted by both Russia and Great Britain in 1904 mentions both Mohammerah and the ports east of Jask as "ports du Golfe Persique."

A table is annexed showing the Persian Customs revenue, capitalized at 5 per cent., so as to illustrate my remarks as to the limits of any new loan. I have not included in this table, as a liability on the Customs, the debts due on account current to the Russian and the Imperial Banks, but only those whose payment is explicitly guaranteed by Customs revenue. It should, moreover, be remembered that the relative value of the northern and southern Customs may be a good deal altered by the new tariff, the general effect of which will be to lower the revenue derived from importations by Persia from the north, and to increase it on importations by her through the southern ports.

#### NORTHERN CUSTOMS.

Capital	...	£	3,200,000	Interest at 5 per cent.	...	£	260,000
Pledged	...	...	3,200,000	Interest and sinking fund	...	...	176,000
Available	...	...	2,000,000				

#### SOUTHERN CUSTOMS.

Capital	...	£	3,600,000	Interest at 5 per cent.	...	£	180,000
Assigned	...	...	500,000	Interest at 12 and 5 per cent.	...	...	50,000
Available	...	...	3,100,000				



## NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN CUSTOMS TOGETHER.

Capital ... ..	£ 8,800,000	Interest at 5 per cent. ...	£ 440,000
Pledged and assigned...	3,600,000	Interest of sinking fund ...	216,000
Available ... ..	5,200,000		260,000

## NORTHERN and Southern Customs together—continued.

1900 Russian Loan ...	Roubles. 22,500,000	} Interest and sinking funds ... {	1,070,194.20 roubles, payable per annum at 9.50 roubles per £ (say) £176,000.
1902 " " ...	10,000,000		
Bank Loans ...	£ circa 300,000	Interest at 12 per cent. ...	£ 36,000 per annum.
Government Loans ...	300,000	Interest at 8 per cent., including sinking fund ...	24,500 "
			60,000 "

## APPENDIX (B).

## STATEMENT illustrating the Trade of Persia with various Countries for the Year 1904.

(N.B.—The pound is taken roughly at 50 krans.)

Imports from—				Amount in—		
				Krans.	£	s. d.
Russia ... ..	...	...	...	184,732,373	3,691,647	9 2
British Empire ...	...	...	...	128,401,253	2,568,025	1 2
Turkey ... ..	...	...	...	10,110,113	201,802	5 2
Austria ... ..	...	...	...	12,075,765	241,515	6 0
Germany ... ..	...	...	...	5,944,810	118,816	4 0
France ... ..	...	...	...	21,956,156	439,123	2 5
Italy ... ..	...	...	...	2,717,279	54,945	11 7
Belgium ... ..	...	...	...	1,402,921	28,058	8 5
Holland ... ..	...	...	...	589,435	11,788	14 0
United States ...	...	...	...	6,401,071	128,021	8 5
Afghanistan ... ..	...	...	...	6,426,058	128,521	3 2
Miscellaneous ...	...	...	...	3,918,924	78,378	1 7
Total ... ..	...	...	...	385,036,158	7,700,642	15 1

Exports to—				Amount in—		
				Krans.	£	s. d.
Russia ... ..	...	...	...	155,512,359	3,110,247	3 7
British Empire ...	...	...	...	21,113,178	422,263	11 2
Turkey ... ..	...	...	...	35,751,187	715,083	14 9
Austria ... ..	...	...	...	Nil	Nil	
Germany ... ..	...	...	...	178,680	3,573	12 0
France ... ..	...	...	...	19,080,430	381,608	12 0
Italy ... ..	...	...	...	5,267,471	105,369	8 5
Belgium ... ..	...	...	...	510,873	10,817	9 2
Holland ... ..	...	...	...	16,964	339	5 7
United States ...	...	...	...	620,906	12,418	2 5
Afghanistan ... ..	...	...	...	3,805,782	76,115	12 5
Miscellaneous ...	...	...	...	12,883,674	257,673	9 7
Total ... ..	...	...	...	254,774,501	5,095,710	1 1

## TOTAL TRADE.

					Amount in—		
					Krans.	£	s. d.
Imports...	...	...	...	...	385,036,158	7,700,642	15 1
Exports ... ..	...	...	...	...	254,774,504	5,095,710	1 1
Total ... ..	...	...	...	...	639,810,662	12,796,352	16 2

(Initialled) A. H. H.

[401]

No. 10.

Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 3.)

(No. 3.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 3, 1906.

FOLLOWING repeated to India and Tabreez :—

Perso-Turkish frontier dispute. Your telegram No. 97 of the 27th December.

I am informed by the Turkish Embassy that the Sultan has refused to withdraw the Turkish troops, and that Djavid Pasha has left Constantinople with a military commission.

[402]

No. 11.

Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 3.)

(No. 4.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 3, 1906.

FOLLOWING repeated to Tabreez and Urmī :—

“My telegram No. 172 of the 11th December.

“The Majid-es-Saltaneh has left Tabreez for Tiflis.

“It has been suggested to me by His Majesty's Consul-General that the Urmī Mullah should be allowed to return to Urmī, and that the present would be a suitable opportunity for conceding this. I think this would produce a good impression at Urmī, and it would please the Grand Vizier and the Valiahd.

“If I were allowed to use my discretion in the matter, I would of course try to get some concession in return.”

[184/34]

No. 12.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.

(No. 5.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 3, 1906.

YOUR telegram No. 182 of the 26th December.

You should concert with Government of India and Consul-General at Bushire the best means of insuring that a force should be available for dispatch to Tehran or any other part of Persia with the least possible delay in the event of necessity arising.

Object must be confined to rescue of British subjects and protection of their lives in emergency.

[481]

No. 13.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 4.)

Sir,

India Office, January 3, 1906.

WITH reference to the Viceroy's telegrams of the 18th December, 1905, and 1st instant, proposing to send arms to Robat, where they would be available either for

Seistan or Meshed or any other place in the east of Persia in the case of necessity, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to state that he sees no objection to the proposal, provided the necessary steps for conveying the arms to Robat and storing them there under a proper guard are taken in such a manner as not to awaken the suspicions of the Persian Government.

Subject to this proviso, Mr. Morley would recommend, for Secretary Sir Edward Grey's consideration, that the proposal of the Government of India should be approved.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[402] No. 14.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant-Duff.*

(No. 6.)  
(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, January 4, 1906.*

RETURN of Mullah to Urumia.

You may use your discretion as to allowing the Mullah to go back, as suggested in your telegram No. 4 of the 3rd instant, but some concession in return should be secured.

[619] No. 15.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 5.)*

Sir, *India Office, January 4, 1906.*

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to forward, for Secretary Sir E. Grey's information, a copy of a letter from the Government of India relative to Sir A. Hardinge's proposal that either the Consul at Turbat-i-Haidari or some other Consular officer should proceed on a yearly tour to Astrabad, in order to report to His Majesty's Legation on affairs in that province, for information regarding which dependence has now to be placed upon the news-letters of a native agent.

Mr. Morley will be glad to be favoured with Sir E. Grey's views upon the suggestion.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

*Inclosure in No. 15.*

*Government of India to Mr. Brodrick.*

Sir, *Fort William, December 7, 1905.*

WE have the honour to refer to Sir A. Hardinge's despatch, dated the 9th September last, to the Marquess of Lansdowne, in the concluding paragraph of which he suggests that an officer of the British Consular staff at Meshed or Turbat-i-Haidari should pay an annual visit of inspection to Astrabad, in order to report on the state of affairs in that province to His Britannic Majesty's Legation at Tehran, who are at present dependent for such information on the news-letters of a native agent.

2. We consider that, in the circumstances described by Sir Arthur Hardinge, there is a good *prima facie* case in favour of the proposal; but before steps are taken to give effect to it, we would suggest that advantage be taken of Sir A. Hardinge's presence in England to obtain an expression of his opinion as to whether the suggestion, if adopted, would be likely to cause offence to the Russian authorities, and provoke retaliatory action on their part.

We have, &c.  
(Signed) MINTO.  
A. T. ARUNDEL.  
DENZIL IBBETSON.  
H. ERLE RICHARDS.  
J. P. HEWETT.  
E. N. BAKER.  
C. H. SCOTT.

Annex.

*Minute by Sir A. Hardinge.*

ASTRABAD. I do not think the Russians would like the annual visit I propose, but they could not well resent it or regard it as unfriendly, as we have a Vice-Consul for Astrabad who is prevented from ever visiting the district by his duties as Imperial Bank Manager at Resht, an arrangement which I consider highly unsatisfactory.

The Persians would like it, as they are completely under Russia's heel there. If the Russians were to say anything to us about it, as they did about Yates' tours in Northern Khorassan, we might offer to check our man's activity on the Turcoman frontier, in return for their doing the same with their Millers and Ovsienkos in the south-east, and even express willingness to suppress the Astrabad post altogether in return for their withdrawing theirs in Kerman and Bunder Abbas, where they have fewer interests than we have on the Caspian. I think with the Russians, the maxim of the offensive being the best defensive is specially applicable, and that no good is done by showing a deference to their susceptibilities which they do not reciprocate as regards ours. They cannot be more active and unfriendly in the south-east than they have already shown themselves, and if we were to give them "tit for tat" in the north, there is nothing more that they could do. This is not, of course, my primary reason for making the proposal, which I think, quite apart from Russian views, needs considering.

[394] No. 16.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 1.)

Sir,

*Foreign Office, January 5, 1906.*

ON the 30th December the Persian Minister communicated a telegram from his Excellency the Mushir-ed-Dowleh to the effect that the Persian Government were not prepared to consent to the formation of a Mixed Commission to inquire into the Turco-Persian frontier dispute until the districts of Lahijan and Vazneh had been evacuated by the Ottoman troops. His Highness Mohammed Ali Khan was accordingly instructed to request that telegraphic instructions might be sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople to support the representations which the Persian Ambassador had made to the Sublime Porte on the subject.

I informed the Persian Minister, in reply, on the 3rd instant that both the British and Russian Ambassadors at Constantinople had strongly advised the Persian Ambassador to urge upon his Government the acceptance of the proposed arrangement, under which the Ottoman Government were to appoint a representative on the Mixed Commission, while retaining their troops at Lahijan and Vazneh.

I added that you had been instructed to use similar language to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, and that His Majesty's Government were unable to alter the views they had already expressed on the question.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[754] No. 17.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)*

(No. 12.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, January 2, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to state that on the 31st December, 1905, I had a long conversation with the Persian Minister, who, I heard, had recently been received by Count Lamsdorff.

I gathered from him that the Russian Minister at Tehran, M. Speyer, was not viewed with favour at the Russian Foreign Office. He is certainly not a *persona grata* at Tehran, where his conduct is regarded as violent and tactless. The Mushir-ul-Mulk thought that he would be recalled, and possibly replaced by M. Hartwig, the Director of the First Department of the Foreign Office. I may observe that I have reason to believe that M. Hartwig is anxious for the appointment, and has spoken to Count

Lamsdorff on the subject, who recently informed me that he could ill spare his assistance.

With regard to the general policy of Russia in Persia, the Mushir-ul-Mulk (who is the son of the Foreign Minister of Persia, and who has been brought up in Russia) affirmed very positively that he did not believe that the aims of Russia in that country were changed since the time of Count Nesselrode, nor would ever change. Russia, he stated, regarded Persia as marked out, not for formal annexation, but rather for gradual absorption by a process of peaceful penetration. The fact that Russian aims in Manchuria had been defeated was an additional reason why Russia should maintain her right to egress to warm water by the only path now open to her. He regarded Russian policy in Manchuria and the Liaotung Peninsula as exactly the same as her policy in Persia—that is, the policy of obtaining an armed port connected with the Russian Empire by a railway, constructed through foreign, though protected, territory, and guarded by Russian troops. The only guarantee which Persia could possess against such a policy was an internal reform, for if she appealed for help to a foreign Power she would only lose her independence in another fashion. He had, he said, been more convinced than ever of the truth of this by his recent conversations at the Russian Foreign Office.

On my alluding to the financial embarrassments of the Persian Government, he confessed that an offer of a loan had been mentioned, but said positively that his Government would never consent to conditions derogatory to the independence and dignity of the country, by which I understood him to mean financial control.

It would appear to be a somewhat remarkable step for Russia to take, in her present financial condition, to offer a pecuniary advance to Persia; but the idea cannot be dismissed as incredible with regard to a Government which, on the eve of the conclusion of peace with Japan, appointed a Committee to consider the question of forest regulations in the Liaotung Peninsula.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

[850]

No. 18.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)*

(No. 5.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 6, 1906.

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

"My telegram No. 176 of the 16th December.

"I am informed by the Grand Vizier that he finds himself unable to meet his engagement to repay the 700,000 tomans advanced by the Bank beyond the legal limit of their concession. The position appears to be serious, unless assistance can be given from outside, for the Manager of the Bank here states that there is no hope of the Directors agreeing to a further postponement."

[1004]

No. 19.

*Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 8.)*

(No. 5.)

Sir,

Pera, January 2, 1906.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 951 of the 27th December, 1905, I have the honour to inclose herewith further correspondence which I have received from the Persian Ambassador bearing upon the Turco-Persian frontier incident, similar communications having been made to the Russian Ambassador.

In speaking of his letter of the 27th December, the Persian Ambassador seemed to consider the extract from the "Journal" of the Russian Commissioner, Major-General Chirikow, was decisive as to the Persian claim to Lahidjan, but I remarked that I thought that it could only be regarded, under the circumstances, as an expression of opinion devoid of the importance of a decision given as Arbitrator, and though not without its value, still insufficient to bind the Turks.

The Ambassador admitted this, but produced a Report of the Turkish Commissioner, Dervish Pasha, stating that Lahidjan was Persian.

I showed him, however, the "identical map" agreed upon between the British and Russian Commissioners, which was communicated to the Turkish and Persian Governments in September 1869 or February 1870, with a copy of which his Highness seemed to be unprovided, and I pointed out to him that Kala Passova, which was now occupied by their troops and protested against by the Ottoman Government, was outside the zone of 20 to 40 miles reserved for delimitation by the Commissioners.

Prince Mirza Khan seemed highly pleased with this information, for which he expressed his great gratitude. He said he would at once go to the Porte and ask for the production of the map, of which he himself had not a copy, and he hoped that this substantial evidence of their claim to Passova would induce the Ottoman Government to withdraw their troops from that place, and thus enable his Government to participate in the appointment of a Mixed Commission, as suggested by the Porte.

Prince Mirza Khan has not since called upon me, so that I do not know whether any satisfactory progress has been made in the negotiations within the last week as a consequence of his last representations.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 19.

*Prince Mirza Khan to Sir N. O'Connor.*

*Ambassade Impériale de Perse, Constantinople,  
le 27 Décembre, 1905.*

M. l'Ambassadeur et cher Collègue,

J'AI l'honneur d'envoyer ci-inclus à votre Excellence la copie d'un extrait du journal du Général-Major Tchirikow, Commissaire Russe pour la délimitation Turco-Persane. D'après ce document, votre Excellence verra que la frontière entre la Perse et la Turquie dans les endroits en litige est désignée naturellement par une chaîne de montagne appelée Kandili; le versant oriental appartient à la Perse, et l'occidental à la Turquie. Lahidjan, Passova, Vezné, et autres, se trouvant sur le versant oriental, ces endroits appartiennent, donc, incontestablement à la Perse.

Comme assurément le rapport identique du Commissaire du Gouvernement Britannique doit se trouver naturellement dans les archives de votre honorable Ambassade, votre Excellence, en cas de besoin, pourra le faire chercher.

J'ai reçu hier de notre Consul-Général à Van un rapport dans lequel il m'informe que le Gouvernement Ottoman dirige huit bataillons d'infanterie, quatre régiments de cavalerie Hamidié, et deux batteries d'artillerie sur Lahidjan et Vezné. Ainsi que je viens de le dire ci-haut, ces endroits appartiennent au Gouvernement Persan. J'ai immédiatement écrit une note à la Sublime Porte, dans laquelle je la prie d'arrêter l'envoi de ces troupes, qui n'est pas conforme aux bonnes relations existant entre les deux Gouvernements, et je me fais un devoir de vous en faire parvenir la copie en Turc.

Veillez, &c.  
(Signé) Prince M. RIZA KHAN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 19.

*Extract from the Journal of Major-General Chirikow, Russian Commissioner for the Delimitation of the Turco-Persian Frontier.*

LE district de Lahidjan a pour chef-lieu Passova village, où est situé un fortin. Ce district, qui appartient aujourd'hui à la Perse, est séparé des possessions Turques, Pichder et autres, par une chaîne de montagnes couvertes de neige, qui porte le nom de Kandilan, et forme une frontière naturelle et bien définie.

Les Bilbass, qui reconnaissent l'autorité de la Perse, sont peu nombreux; l'un de leurs Chefs habite le fortin de Passova, tandis qu'un autre mène un genre de vie nomade dans les environs de cette localité.

## Inclosure 3 in No. 19.

*Persian Embassy to Ottoman Ministry for Foreign Affairs.*

(Translation.)

December 13 (26), 1905.

THE Persian Consul at Van now reports that, in pursuance of telegraphic orders from the Ministry of War to the Mushir at Erzingian, eight battalions of regular infantry, four battalions of Hamidieh cavalry, with two batteries of artillery, have been sent towards Lahidjan, in Persian territory. As such invasion of Persian territory is entirely at variance with the good and friendly relations happily subsisting between the two States, and cannot be viewed without concern by my Government, I beg to request that you will move the proper authorities to send orders for the immediate withdrawal of these troops from Persian territory.

## Inclosure 4 in No. 19.

*Prince Mirza Khan to Sir N. O'Connor.*

*Ambassade Impériale de Perse, Stamboul,  
le 29 Décembre, 1905.*

M. l'Ambassadeur et cher Collègue,

J'AI l'honneur d'envoyer à votre Excellence ci-inclus les copies de la note que j'ai reçue hier de la Sublime Porte relativement à l'affaire de Lahidjan, ainsi que la traduction en Français du télégramme du Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de Perse, concernant la dite affaire.

Veuillez, &c.  
(Signé) Prince M. RIZA KHAN.

## Inclosure 5 in No. 19.

*Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs to Prince Mirza Khan.*

(Traduction.)

Téhéran, le Décembre, 1905.

J'AI soumis à Sa Majesté Impériale le Schah votre dépêche chiffrée, par laquelle vous m'avez informé votre entrevue avec Son Altesse le Grand Vézir, son Excellence le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, ainsi que leurs Excellences les Ambassadeurs de la Grande-Bretagne et Russie.

Pour appuyer les démarches de votre Altesse, nous avons écrit aux Ministres de la Grande-Bretagne et de Russie à Téhéran; plus, nous avons télégraphié à nos Ministres à Londres et Saint-Petersbourg, afin de faire les démarches nécessaires auprès des Ministres des Affaires Étrangères de ces deux Puissances, pour qu'ils envoient des instructions nécessaires à leurs Ambassadeurs à Constantinople pour qu'ils vous prêtent leurs concours. Les Légations de la Grande-Bretagne et de Russie à Téhéran sont d'avis que l'Ambassadeur de Perse doit montrer à la Sublime Porte les preuves constatant la possession du Gouvernement Impérial Persan sur les territoires en question; alors leurs Ambassadeurs à Constantinople lui prêteront leurs concours et feront eux-mêmes des démarches à la Sublime Porte pour faire retirer les troupes Ottomanes.

Sa Majesté Impériale le Schah m'ordonne de vous communiquer que toutes les preuves constatant la possession du territoire de Lahidjan par la Perse vous ayant été données, et comme vous connaissez complètement les détails, votre Altesse doit sauvegarder les intérêts du Gouvernement Impérial, et tant que les troupes ne se seront pas retirées, nous ne pourrions pas consentir à une enquête mixte.

Tant que ces territoires ne seront pas rendus à leur état primitif, vous devez faire tout votre possible afin que les droits incontestables du Gouvernement Impérial ne soient pas lésés.

Par ordre Impérial vous êtes chargé de faire les démarches nécessaires afin que les troupes soient retirées le plus tôt possible, et ces endroits soient remis de nouveau à leur état primitif, et m'informer le résultat de vos démarches.

(Signé) Muchir-i-Dovleh.

## Inclosure 6 in No. 19.

*Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs to Persian Ambassador.*

(Translation.)

Constantinople, December 13 (26), 1905.

YOUR Excellency's despatch of the 24th Shawal, giving the sense of a telegram which your Excellency had received from Tehran to the effect that the joint inquiry which it is proposed to make in regard to Wazna, Lahidjan, Mighian, and Keloshiekh can only be undertaken on the evacuation of Wazna and certain other points, and containing certain communications on that subject, was duly submitted to the Grand Vizier. I have now had the honour to receive a reply from his Highness, in which it is set forth that, as you have previously been informed, the record of past events proves that Wazna, Lahidjan, Mighian, and the surrounding districts have at various times in the past been recognized as part of the Imperial Ottoman dominions, and troops have been dispatched there on our part whenever incursions have taken place from the other side, and that, therefore, it is only as a concession to the cordial relations existing between the two States that the Imperial Ottoman Government has consented to the proposal put forward by the Government of the State which you represent in regard to the investigation of that part of the frontier by a Mixed Commission, and that the Imperial Iradé which has been promulgated in regard to this Commission was issued in the sense indicated above. As it is desirable, with a view to the settlement of this question, that the Commission should enter upon its labours at the earliest possible moment, I have the honour to beg your Excellency to use your best endeavours with a view to that end.

[1090]

No. 20.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 8.)*

(No. 6.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 8, 1906.

KUHAK buildings. Your telegram No. 1.

I yesterday received the call of the Yamin-i-Nizam and the Deputy-Governor. They were both in full uniform, and I accepted their apology, which was suitably worded.

(Repeated to India.)

[481]

No. 21.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 8, 1906.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, on the subject of arms for Meshed and Seistan.

I am to inform you that Sir E. Grey concurs in the proposal of the Secretary of State for India to approve the suggestion contained in the telegram from the Government of India of the 18th ultimo, that the arms should be stored at Kobat, provided that they are conveyed and stored there in such a manner as not to awaken the suspicions of the Persian Government.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GORST.

[1206]

No. 22.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 10.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosure in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated 14th December, relative to Russo-Afghan relations and the situation in Seistan.

India Office, January 9, 1906.

[1618]

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## Inclosure in No. 22.

*Government of India to Ameer of Afghanistan.*

(After compliments.)

*Fort William, December 4, 1905*

I HAVE duly received your Highness's friendly letter of the 4th Ramazan 1323 H., corresponding to the 2nd November, 1905, A.D., and beg to thank your Highness for the information it gives about the proceedings of the Russian Government on your Highness's frontier and about the situation in Seistan.

I have sent a copy of your Highness's letter to His Majesty's Government, and have also telegraphed a summary of its contents. As soon as I hear what action His Majesty's Government consider it desirable to take with reference to the shooting of the khassadar on the border near Chahil Dukhteran, and the attempt of the Russian officer to visit the Governor of Afghan Turkestan at Mazar-i-Sharif, I will not fail to inform your Highness.

The question regarding the situation in Seistan may conveniently be dealt with separately, and I hope shortly to be in a position to reply to that portion of your Highness's letter which relates to the non-acceptance by the Persian Government of Colonel McMahon's Water Award.

[1241]

No 23.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 10.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 9th January, relative to the concessions recommended by the Government of India if it should be decided to grant a further loan to the Persian Government.

*India Office, January 10, 1906.*

## Inclosure in No. 23.

*Government of India to Mr Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*January 9, 1906.*

PERSIAN Loan. My telegram of the 22nd ultimo.

In the event of its being decided to grant loan, the following are the concessions which we would recommend should be obtained:—

(1.) Concession for road from Bunder Abbas, via Regan, to Bam, together with exclusive right of running motors or other mechanically propelled vehicles thereon. Practicability of this road, and its convertibility, if and when required, into a railway, is established by investigation recently carried out by competent officer.

(2.) Undertaking on the part of Persian Government that any roads, railways, telegraphs, or canals in Southern Persia shall be constructed under the auspices of His Majesty's Government, in so far as foreign assistance may be required for the purpose. The country to the south of line drawn from Khanikin to Birjand shall be understood to be covered by the term "Southern Persia."

(3.) Right to carry out Karun irrigation scheme on the lines indicated in the despatch of November 1901 from the Government of India. Data at present available point to project being remunerative, though investigation is not complete.

(4.) Right to connect Robat with Nasratabad by line of telegraph.

The first two concessions are by far the most important. Grounds for request are furnished by the recommendation of the recent Commercial Mission, and by the inefficacy of the Lar Road Concession owing to the unrest prevailing among the tribesmen. Extension by Russia of her roads or railways to the coast between Bunder Abbas or Gwettar would, it is obvious, be precluded by road such as that described.

The Karun irrigation scheme is one in which India is less immediately concerned;

it should not be present independently to the prejudice of concessions (1) or (2), falling as it does within general scope of (2).

As regards the Robat-Nasratabad telegraph extension, this may have been agreed to already as a set-off to Russian telegraph from Bajgiran; but, if not, it should be secured in addition to all or any of the other concessions named above; it might be arranged concurrently with the negotiations as to the loan, but without any express stipulation being inserted in the loan contract with regard to it.

As indicating that there has been no slackening of Russia's activity in pushing her influence in Persia, we may add that we have received a telegraphic report, dated the 29th December, from Major Sykes to the effect that negotiations for road from Tehran to Meshed are being carried on by Russian Minister.

(Repeated to Grant Duff.)

[1315]

No. 24.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 10.)*

(No. 7.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 10, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

"Witness beaten by Sardar-i-Ahram. Your telegram No. 1.

"I am informed by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh that the Shah will not allow the Governor of Shiraz to offer an apology to His Majesty's Consul for his conduct in this matter. It should, I think, be pressed, and I beg that I may be furnished with instructions."

[1314]

No. 25.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 10.)*

(No. 8.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 10, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

"Douglas-Lorimer outrage.

"Persian Government have declined to pay compensation. In my opinion nothing can be effected by diplomatic pressure, and I think the time has come to take strong action to enforce the payment of this and other claims."

[1320]

No. 26.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 10.)*

(No. 10.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 10, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

"I have been asked by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh for the Henjam Bunder Abbas telegraph line account, which his Excellency says the Persian Government are now prepared to settle."

[1321]

No. 27.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 10.)*

(No. 11.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 10, 1906.*

THE Government of India request me to repeat to you the following telegram which I sent to them and to Bushire on the 6th instant:—

"Your telegram No. 3.

"In the event of its being necessary to bring in troops, such action would probably be against the wish of the Persian Government, if any Government were still in existence (see my despatches now on their way to you); but all I recommend for the

present is that we should take precautionary measures. It is probable that any movement would be directed against the Government, but it might involve Armenians or Europeans.

"Tehran is quiet, but the Mollahs are still outside at the shrine."

[483]

No. 28.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 9.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, January 10, 1906.*

THE Grand Vizier and the Minister for Foreign Affairs have telegraphed to the Persian Minister complaining of the harsh tone and unusual language of the representations you have made on the subject of the condition of Fars Province, and of your demands for the dismissal of the Governor and his Minister.

These telegrams, which are dated the 3rd instant, have been brought here by the Persian Minister.

The expressions "incapacity, cruelty, and tyranny," used in your letter of the 17th September, 1905, are alluded to by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Grand Vizier declares you threatened, in an interview of the 2nd instant, that you would carry out instructions of His Majesty's Government unless you received on the following day an assurance that the Governor would be dismissed from office. The Persian Government seem, from a previous telegram communicated by the Minister some days ago, to be under the impression that you have applied to me for authority to obtain Indian cavalry and send them to Shiraz from Bushire. They state that matters will soon be put on a better footing, as the official who has been sent to inquire into the state of the country will arrive shortly; that the situation at Shiraz has been much exaggerated; that the inhabitants have taken "bast," but that no actual disturbances have taken place; and they argue with some force that, without some inquiry into the facts of the case by the Persian Government, so serious a step as the dismissal from the post of Governor-General of a near relative of the Shah should not be undertaken on the complaint of a foreign Representative.

The official who has been sent to Shiraz is considered by Sir A. Hardinge to be a sensible and capable man, and, as the Governor-General is at present in Paris, an assurance that he shall not continue in office seems more important than the exact date of his dismissal.

I have informed the Persian Minister that your impatience and forcible language are justified by the inattention with which your representations on various subjects have been treated, but I cannot help thinking that it would be better to abstain from using expressions which are scarcely admitted in diplomacy, and that, in the absence of instructions from the Secretary of State, peremptory demands for answers within a brief period should not be resorted to.

Such methods give the Persian Government an excuse for making complaints here and evading further treatment of the question with you, while we have scarcely sufficient information to deal with the question effectually.

[1379]

No. 29.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 11.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 9th January, relative to the Henjam Telegraph Station.

*India Office, January 10, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 29.

*Mr. Morley to the Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*India Office, January 9, 1906.*

YOUR telegram of the 23rd ultimo regarding the British telegraph station on Henjam.

Persian Government's acquiescence in actual facts of our occupation during years 1868-1880 must, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, be regarded as equivalent to formal concession of the land occupied.

Instructions in this sense have been sent to Grant Duff in reply to his telegram of the 15th ultimo.

[1380]

No. 30.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 11.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 9th instant, relative to the suggested depôt of arms at Robat.

*India Office, January 10, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 30.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*India Office, January 9, 1906.*

PROPOSED depôt of arms at Robat. Your telegrams of the 18th December, 1905, and 1st instant. Provided that conveyance of arms to Robat and their storage there under proper guard is carried out in such a manner as not to arouse Persian Government's suspicion, His Majesty's Government agree to your suggestion.

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No. 31.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 10.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, January 11, 1906.*

ALTHOUGH it would be very desirable to obtain a settlement of at least a portion of outstanding British claims, as suggested in your telegram No. 2 of the 1st instant, it seems doubtful whether the present moment is favourable for an attempt, as the Persian Government are in such desperate straits for money.

If you represented the matter to the Shah it is possible that he might reply by an expression of good-will, and a statement that he would instruct his Minister here to offer explanations, and it would not be easy for you to pursue the discussion.

I should therefore, on the whole, be disposed to postpone any direct appeal to His Majesty on the subject until we have grounds for pointing to some friendly action on our part, and for stating that we are entitled to expect a corresponding demonstration of good-will from the Persian Government.

To threaten an occupation of Bushire, or other forcible measures, would also be inconvenient, unless we were prepared to carry out the threat in case our demands were not complied with, and any action of this kind might produce consequences which we have no desire to hasten.

[1431]

No. 32.

*Memorandum communicated to the Persian Minister, January 11, 1906.*

IT would seem from the communications which the Persian Minister has made to Sir Edward Grey that some apprehension exists at Tehran that the policy and sentiments of the present Ministry are less favourable to the Persian Government than those of their predecessors. There is no ground for this impression, and the Persian Minister is authorized to assure his Government that the sentiments of Sir Edward Grey and his colleagues do not differ from those entertained by the Marquess of Lansdowne and the late Cabinet.

Sir Edward Grey thinks it right, however, to observe that there seems to have been of late more difficulty than usual in obtaining a satisfactory settlement of various matters on which it has been found necessary to address representations to the Persian Government.

*Foreign Office, January 11, 1906.*

[1309]

No. 33.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir, I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,\* relative to the recruiting of Berberis or Hazaras by His Majesty's Consul-General in Khorassan, for service in regiments in British Babuchistan.

It will be observed that this practice appears to have been adopted without consulting His Majesty's Legation at Tehran, and that Mr. Grant Duff was unaware of it until his attention was called to the matter by the Persian Government.

Sir E. Grey concurs in Mr. Grant Duff's view that such recruiting should not have taken place without previous consultation with His Majesty's Legation, but as the Government of India have expressed their regret for the omission, he has no desire to press the matter further.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) SANDERSON.

[1467]

No. 34.

*The Imperial Bank of Persia to the Foreign Office. - (Received January 12.)*

My Lord, 25, Abchurch Lane, London, January 11, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to solicit your consideration and that of the Secretary of State to certain circumstances connected with the financial liabilities and obligations of the Persian Government towards the Imperial Bank of Persia.

You are aware that the Government of the Shah had expressed some irritation at the refusal of the Imperial Bank to advance them 150,000*l.*, for reasons which were fully explained to you at the time, and set forth in my letter of the 15th July to the British Minister at Tehran, a copy of which was forwarded to you with my letter of the same date. I had previously ventured to suggest to you, in my letter of the 15th June, the advisability of granting to the Persian Government the money required, even without conditions, as a safe financial operation with important political advantages attached to it.

Although we were precluded from making the desired advance, it was impossible for the Imperial Bank, at the time of the Shah's journey to Europe and during his absence, when the Administration was in financial difficulties from the war and the decrease in customs revenue, to refuse to honour the cheques of the Persian Government. Such a refusal on the part of the State Bank would have had a very injurious effect upon our position, and would have destroyed that confidence in our readiness to

\* Mr. E. Grant Duff, No. 250, of December 2, 1907.

assist the Government in critical times which they have till now reposed in us. Our action was largely due to the fact that we were aware that the Foreign Office, on behalf of the Indian Government, had expressed their readiness to make a loan, through the Imperial Bank, to the Government of the Shah, on conditions by no means onerous or difficult of acceptance. The indebtedness of the Persian Government to the Imperial Bank, beyond the limits of our concession, rose, under these circumstances, to more than 100,000*l.*, and it became necessary to regularize the position before the accounts of the year were made up.

The Board of the Imperial Bank made every attempt to obtain payment, but without success; and as the result of protracted negotiations, and with the assistance of His Majesty's Legation, we obtained a promissory note, at two months, for the amount due, signed by the Prime Minister and indorsed by His Majesty the Shah.

This, in a few words, is the position, and the Board of Directors would venture to hope that the grant of a loan to the Persian Government of such amount as may be considered desirable, and with or without conditions, may be favourably entertained and carried to completion.

The Directors do not urge this from any fear of loss of the money advanced, but from the conviction that unless the British Government assists them, the Persian Government will apply to Russia for the necessary loan. Although the condition of that country does not seem favourable to lending, yet the security is so good and the rate of interest so high that a loan to Persia would be a remunerative operation; while the conditions Russia would exact would render it politically advantageous to her, and detrimental to British interests. The loans already made by the Indian Government and the Imperial Bank would be paid off, and the position of this institution, which is the one important unofficial representative of British interests in Persia, would receive a serious blow. Considering the political outlook, the Board of Directors cannot but believe that His Majesty's Government will not allow the opportunity to escape of obtaining, by the security for the loan, a dominating position in the Gulf by a lien on its whole customs revenue, and thus carry out the policy which they have always and successfully upheld. But unless this opportunity be taken by England, we fear that it will certainly be taken by Russia, to the lasting injury of British political and economical interests in Persia.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) LIONEL GRIFFIN, Chairman. *Lefel*

[1557]

No. 35.

*India Office to Foreign Office. - (Received January 12.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 12th January, relative to arms for the Persian Consulates.

*India Office, January 12, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 35.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*January 12, 1906.*

YOUR telegram of 1st January (?). Arms for Meshed and Seistan Consulates.

Arrangements were made, on receipt of your telegram above cited, to send 130 rifles, under a guard of one double company, Native Infantry, to Robat, in order that if, as seemed probable at the time, necessity should arise, Meshed could be reinforced by sending up the mounted escorts now at Turbat and Seistan, while the Seistan escort could be replaced by the infantry, which would also provide a guard for Kerman. As stated in our previous telegram, the guard and rifles sent to Robat were not to cross the frontier except on requisition, and (as in the case of escorts for Southern Persia) we would ask to be furnished with full details as to the political situation in Persia, in order that military authorities may be in a position to decide whether it will be safe to send such small detachments.



With reference to your telegram of the 9th instant, it will be impossible for guard and rifles to be sent to Robat without Persian Government becoming aware of the fact. We are, however, of opinion that the step should be taken if risk of disturbances exists. Intimation can be made to the Persian Government, should it be thought necessary, to the effect that we have thought it necessary, in view of possibility of disturbances, to adopt measures of precaution within our own frontiers, for the purpose of protecting British interests and of preventing the danger of spread of disturbances.

[1558]

No. 36.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 12.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 11th January, relative to the provision of Consular guards for disturbed districts in Persia.

*India Office, January 12, 1906.*

*Inclosure in No. 36.*

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*January 11, 1906.*

YOUR telegrams of the 24th and 29th ultimo, relative to guards for dispatch to Persia.

We are holding in readiness a force of 140 infantry, and will give instructions for the movements indicated below to be carried out on our receiving a requisition to that effect, provided that we are at the same time furnished with the latest available information as to political situation in Persia, so that military authorities here may be enabled to satisfy themselves that risk of sending such small detachments across Persia is one that may reasonably be incurred. Above proviso is essential, since the possibility of a general and successful rising against Persian Government is suggested in a telegram of the 6th instant from Grant Duff to Resident at Bushire. Question of the action to be taken to protect British and Indian interests in Persia in such a contingency will doubtless be considered by His Majesty's Government, and we trust we should in due course be consulted in the event of our co-operation being found necessary.

As regards distribution of 140 guards above-mentioned, 50 are intended for Ispahan, a notorious anti-foreign centre, and 50 for Tehran, *vide* the telegram of the 22nd ultimo from Grant Duff: latter could reach Tehran in from 43 to 57 days after leaving Bushire. Both above detachments would be sent *via* Bushire and Shiraz. Forty men would be sent to Shiraz from Bushire, which would be reinforced to the same extent.

(Repeated to Tehran and Bushire.)

[1587]

No. 37.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 12.)*

(No. 12.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 12, 1906.*

MY telegram No. 178 of the 22nd December, and your telegram No. 9 of the 10th January.

All my reports on the condition of Shiraz and of Fars in general have not reached you, and I fear that such as have done so, notably my No. 254 of the 3rd December, have failed to make clear to you in what a dangerous state that district is. Facts do not bear out the Persian Minister's reassuring statements as to the condition of Fars, which was lately reported by His Majesty's Consul to be critical. Disturbances at Shiraz and in the province are continual, and brigandage is rampant. I forwarded

by last messenger a list of thirty robberies perpetrated on the Bushire road on British goods alone.

Such great cruelties have been committed by the present Governor and Vazir, and they have robbed the province to such an extent, that the people of Shiraz decline to permit their continuance in office, and have telegraphed recently to the "Chefs de Mission" in Tehran, setting forth their grievances, and imploring us to lay them before the Shah.

I am now, by your instructions, pressing for an apology for a gross act of discourtesy to His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz, whose representations are consistently treated with contempt. Messengers of His Majesty's Consulate-General at Bushire, while carrying despatches, were recently robbed and beaten by road guards; and illegal road tax has, owing to my continued pressure, only recently been removed.

The specific words mentioned in the Persian Minister's complaint were not used in an official note, as his Excellency led you to suppose, but in a private letter of the 17th November to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, copy of which has already been forwarded to you in my despatch No. 254. Far from taking offence, the Mushir-ed-Dowleh informed me confidentially that my views regarding the Governor of Fars and his administration were fully shared by himself.

The statement regarding Indian cavalry refers, I presume, to the verbal hint which, by Lord Lansdowne's instructions (see Foreign Office telegram No. 89), I gave to the Grand Vizier, and, after hearing that the Bushire road was in a worse state than ever, repeated on the 2nd January.

The dismissal of the Governor-General never formed the subject of any official demand on my part, though it must be within your recollection that I suggested that the time was approaching when an official demand to that effect would be politic. I have urged the Persian Government repeatedly to reform the administration of Fars, and brought to their notice the malpractices of the Governor-General; but the statement that I demanded his dismissal within a fixed time, and threatened that if this was not done I would carry out instructions of His Majesty's Government is palpably absurd, for instructions on this point have never been received by me either from Lord Lansdowne or yourself. I did complain strongly of the impossibility of obtaining replies to various notes addressed to the Persian Government, and insisted that it was my right to receive answers within a reasonable period.

Reference to the following telegrams will, I trust, absolve me from the charge of taking peremptory action without reference to the Secretary of State:—

My telegrams Nos. 129, 130, 138, 139, 142, 147, 155, 157, 178, 179, 186 of last year, and Nos. 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 of 1906.

My personal relations with both the Grand Vizier and the Mushir-ed-Dowleh are excellent, so that I can only suppose that recourse has been had by the Persian Government to the time-honoured device of complaining of His Majesty's Representative here with the object of sounding the new British Government, and ascertaining whether they can rely on the weakening of British policy in Persia, and of seeing how far they can go in resisting our just demands.

On various occasions I have found it necessary, with Lord Lansdowne's approval, to be firm with the Persian Government; but, in spite of great provocation, my official communications, verbal as well as written, have always been strictly correct, and it seems to me that the onus of proving the contrary lies with the Persian Government.

For some months the condition of Persia has been steadily growing worse, and I have already warned His Majesty's Government that there may be trouble in this country (see my telegram No. 178). His Majesty's Consul at Tabreez reports that, owing to the influx of refugees from the Caucasus, the state of that town is again threatening. Here the bazaars were closed on Wednesday and troops called out. The Mollahs, who are still at Shah Abdul Azim, are placarding the bazaars with revolutionary notices, and demanding Constitutional Government.

A number of disagreeable cases, which were not of my making, such as the destruction of the Seistan Mission buildings at Kubak, have lately occupied my attention, but I trust you will be convinced by the above explanation that I have never been deliberately unconciliatory in my attitude to the Persian Government. I would, in any case, respectfully submit that if the Persian Government receive any hint that my action is disapproved by His Majesty's Government, the hope, which is already remote, of getting any of our claims or cases, which have been out-

[1618]

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standing for years, settled, or, indeed, of being able to get anything whatever done, will vanish altogether.

I regret that before seeing the Persian Minister you had not received my despatches, which are now on their way to you.

(Repeated to India.)

[1585]

No. 38.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 12.)*

(No. 13.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 12, 1906.

FOLLOWING sent to India:—

"I am informed by His Majesty's Consul in Seistan that a disease has broken out there which suspiciously resembles plague. The Russian doctor has reported to the Tehran Sanitary Council that it actually is plague. I have instructed His Majesty's Consul to send the Consulate doctor to investigate.

"Care must be taken to prevent the Russians from placing quarantine guards in the province of Seistan."

[1586]

No. 39.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 12.)*

(No. 15.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 12, 1906.

FOLLOWING is telegram from Bushire, of which you ask repetition in your telegram No. 12:—

"Your telegrams Nos. 6 and 7.

"The Jask detachment at present consists of 1 native officer, 51 rank and file, and 2 followers. At Charbar there are 1 native officer, 51 rank and file, and 10 followers.

"The contemplated dispatch of troops is, I infer, entirely in connection with the Shiraz disturbances and other riots, but I should be glad of your opinion as to whether the Persian Government would concur or oppose the entry of our troops. If the native element on the route were informed of our object I anticipate that there would be little or no hostility from them, but there would doubtless be obstruction on the part of officials.

"I have no present grounds for anticipating revolution in my Gulf jurisdiction, or hostility to foreigners at the ports, but the ports might possibly be affected by any general movement, and more men might be got from Karachi just as expeditiously as they could be transferred from the Jask and Charbar detachments, but the Bushire detachment might be indented upon, pending replacement, for any immediate emergency at Ispahan or Shiraz. In an emergency, selected interpreters could probably be provided for any small detachments that might be sent up-country under native officers, but it would be preferable to secure the services of Persian-speaking British officers."

[1734]

No. 40.

*Mr. E. Grant-Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 13.)*

(No. 17.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 13, 1906.

FOLLOWING repeated to India and Bushire:—

"Indo-Persian Postal Agreement.

"The original of Lord Lansdowne's despatch No. 85 of the 17th June last was handed on the 18th July to M. Naus, who, previous to his departure from Persia in October, informed me verbally that he personally had no objection to the conclusion of an agreement on the lines which His Majesty's Government desire.

"Since then I have made several applications for a reply, but have received none and I suspect that M. Naus, who will attend the Postal Conference at Rome, has been instructed to raise the question of the Persian Gulf post-offices there."

[1739]

No. 41.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 13.)*

(No. 18.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 13, 1906.

FOLLOWING telegram sent to Seistan to-day and repeated to India:—

"The existence of plague in Seistan is declared by the President of the Sanitary Council to have been established. If this proves to be the case, the doctor of the Consulate should co-operate with the Customs officials and Russian doctor."

[1749]

No. 42.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 13.)*

(No. 19.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 13, 1906.

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

"Your telegram No. 9 and my telegram No. 12. The people of Shiraz to-day addressed the following telegram to all Heads of Missions here:—

"The cruelty of the present Government has now kept Shiraz, the towns, villages, and tribes, in a state of riot for seventy days. We have already sent you one telegram on this subject. The disturbance is so serious that the commercial houses and bazaars are closed and all trade and caravan traffic at a standstill. The lamentation of the oppressed wearies us, and we hope that you will be gracious enough to induce the Persian Government, by changing the Governor, to give us peace and tranquillity."

"According to information which has reached me from a good source, the Fars tribesmen have telegraphed to the Shah that they will resist to their last cartridge if the present Governor returns."

[1750]

No. 43.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 14.)*

(No. 20.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 13, 1906.

I HAVE now received confirmation of the existence of plague of a virulent type in Seistan. His Majesty's Consul is in communication with the Government of India for the supply of medicines and the sending of a European doctor. He telegraphs as follows:—

"An attempt may be made by the Russian Government to establish a military cordon to the north of Seistan. In order to prevent this, it would seem advisable that we should at once dispatch troops to Robat, on the plea that we wish to protect our own frontier, so that we may be in a position to insist that the Belgians should have exclusive control of the quarantine arrangements, or, failing that, should ourselves provide the cordon."

Perhaps the small body of troops which, according to the Viceroy's telegram of the 12th January, to the Secretary of State for India, is being sent to Robat in connection with the Consulate arms question might be utilized for the purpose suggested by Captain Macpherson.

[1751]

No. 44.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 14.)*

(No. 21.)

(Telegraphic. P.

*Tehran, January 14, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India :—

“ My telegram No. 12.

“ The discontented Mullahs have been brought back to Tehran in the Shah's State carriages. The concessions made to them by the Government are, as far as I can at present ascertain :

“ 1. A representative Council, composition of which is reserved for later discussion.

“ 2. Certain changes in the Administration of the Customs, also to be discussed hereafter.

“ 3. Restitution to the Mullahs of the endowment of a certain college which was recently confiscated.

“ 4. Abolition of the reduction of 5 per cent. now made on all salaries.

“ The state of Tehran is normal for the present.

“ It is certain that intrigues with the Mullahs against the Government have been carried on by various high officials.”

[1315]

No. 45.

*Memorandum communicated to Persian Minister, January 16, 1906.*

IN October last, Mr. Grahame, His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz, reported to His Majesty's Charge d'Affaires at Tehran, that he had addressed a note to the Karguzar notifying a theft of one bale of goods, the property of some British merchants, Messrs. Dixon, which had occurred near Kaloon-i-Abdari on the 22nd August. Mr. Grahame had inclosed the statements of the muleteers Seyyid Khoda Rahm and Gholam regarding this robbery, and had sent these two men with the letter and the Consular farrash to the Karguzar, with a request that the necessary steps might be taken in the matter. It would appear to be the usual practice for the local authorities to call for the production of the muleteers in cases of inquiry into road robberies.

On the 6th October Seyyid Khoda Rahm came to His Majesty's Consulate and stated that, having been sent by the Karguzar with his servant to the Sirdar-i-Akram, Vazir of Fars, for examination, the latter, after questioning him, had caused him to be thrown down and beaten. He exhibited recent scars on both legs in support of this statement.

Mr. Grahame caused the muleteer's statement to be taken down in writing and sealed by him. One copy of this document was sent to the Karguzar for transmission to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, and another to Mr. Grant Duff for such action as he might think proper to take.

Mr. Grant Duff, rightly considering that the conduct of the Vazir of Fars on this occasion was not only a mark of grave disrespect to His Majesty's Consulate, but would also have a deplorable effect in discouraging witnesses from coming forward in similar cases of road robberies in the future, at once addressed a note to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh urging that Sirdar-i-Akram should be instructed to call upon Mr. Grahame and offer a formal apology. The Persian Government having demurred to grant the reparation proposed, Mr. Grant Duff referred the question to His Majesty's Government, and was directed to address a strong representation to them on the subject.

Mr. Grant Duff now reports that the Persian Government have maintained their refusal to permit the Sirdar-i-Akram to apologize to Mr. Grahame.

His Majesty's Government have learnt with surprise of this decision. The molestation of a witness sent to a Persian official by one of His Majesty's Consular officers is a proceeding to which they must take grave exception, both as affecting the status of His Majesty's Consulate, and in view of the deplorable consequences which such action must entail.

It is requested that the Ala-es-Sultaneh will be so good as to telegraph to the

Persian Government informing them of the view held by His Majesty's Government in the matter, and strongly urging that instructions should at once be sent to the Sirdar-i-Akram to make an official call upon Mr. Grahame and offer a suitable apology.

*Foreign Office, January 16, 1906.*

[1587]

No. 46.

*Memorandum communicated to Persian Minister, January 16, 1906.*

HIS MAJESTY'S Government have been in communication with His Majesty's Charge d'Affaires at Tehran on the subject of the complaints made against him in the telegrams from His Royal Highness the Atabeg-i-Azam and his Excellency the Mushir-ed-Dowleh which were left at the Foreign Office by the Persian Minister on the 4th instant.

As the Persian Minister has already been verbally informed, the expressions with regard to His Royal Highness the Shuah-es-Sultaneh and his Vizier, of which the Mushir-ed-Dowleh complains, were used in a private letter addressed by Mr. Grant Duff to his Excellency of the 17th November last and not in any official communication.

It is contrary to diplomatic usage that phrases used in such personal and intimate communications should be made the subject of official complaint.

Mr. Grant Duff entirely disclaims having made any demand in conversation with the Atabeg-i-Azam, as stated in His Royal Highness's telegram, for the dismissal of the Shuah-es-Sultaneh within twenty-four hours, threatening, in case of non-compliance, that he would execute the instructions from His Majesty's Government. Such a demand and such a threat are inconsistent with the tenour of Mr. Grant Duff's correspondence with the Secretary of State. His Majesty's Government are convinced that His Royal Highness must have misunderstood the observations made to him by Mr. Grant Duff on the occasion referred to.

It appears to them that the charge of having used language of this nature ought not to have been made without the greatest care being taken to be sure that Mr. Grant Duff had advisedly used the language attributed to him.

According to the accounts which His Majesty's Government have received, the condition of Fars, and especially of Shiraz, is much more serious than the Persian Government appear to realize.

Not only was an appeal made to His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz in November last for his assistance in obtaining redress for the grievances of the inhabitants, but as lately as the 13th instant a telegram has been addressed by the people of that town to all the foreign Representatives at Tehran, urging them to request the Persian Government to restore peace and tranquillity by changing the Governor.

In these circumstances His Majesty's Government consider that the earnest representations which Mr. Grant Duff has made both to the Atabeg-i-Azam and the Mushir-ed-Dowleh were fully justified in view of the British interests, which are endangered by the general insecurity in the district. This is shown by the facts that thirty cases of robbery of British goods alone have recently taken place on the Bushire road, and that the messengers of His Majesty's Consul-General have been robbed and beaten by road guards while carrying despatches.

His Majesty's Government have observed with regret that representations which Mr. Grant Duff has been instructed to make to the Persian Government on various pending questions have not received the favourable and friendly consideration which His Majesty's Government think they have a right to expect. They earnestly trust that the attitude of the Persian Government in this respect will be modified.

*Foreign Office, January 16, 1906.*

[2229]

No. 47.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 18.)*

Sir,

*India Office, January 17, 1906.*

WITH reference to the letter from this Office of the 24th May last, relative to the claim of the British India Steam Navigation Company against the Persian Government for the detention of the steam-ship "Kassara" at Bushire in December 1904, I am

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directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to forward, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the copy of a letter from the Government of India on the subject.\*

Since the exchange of notes reported in Sir A. Hardinge's despatch No. 59 of the 20th March, 1905, no action has, so far as Mr. Morley is aware, been taken in the matter by His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, and, having regard to the opinion now expressed by the Government of India, and to all the circumstances of the case, Mr. Morley, subject to any observations which Sir E. Grey may have to offer, is not disposed to recommend that the claim should be pressed upon the Persian Government.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[1587]

No. 48.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 14.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, January 18, 1906.*

WITH reference to your telegram No. 16 of the 12th instant, the following is a summary of a communication I have made to the Persian Minister:—

[Substance of Memorandum to Persian Minister, January 16, 1906.]

[2324]

No. 49.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 19.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 16th instant, relative to the plague in Seistan.

*India Office, January 18, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 49.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*India Office, January 16, 1906.*

PLAGUE in Seistan.

If plague has already advanced from India, a cordon between India and Seistan would not be sufficient; it would become necessary to form a quarantine cordon on the north and west of Seistan, and, if existence of plague is established, it must be recognized that Russia, and, indeed, all Europe, will have cause for alarm and for measures of precaution. If, therefore, as is almost certain to be the case, we are unable to obtain control of the arrangements ourselves, it might be wise to take steps at the outset with a view to insuring that the Persian Government, in any sanitary measures they may take, shall act jointly, and in concert with ourselves and the Russians, our immediate object being to prevent complications arising as a result of hasty or independent action taken locally either by British or Russian officers. I shall be glad to be furnished with your views on the questions raised, together with any information you may possess as to the reality of these cases of plague in Seistan.

This telegram should be repeated to Mr. Grant Duff.

[2383]

No. 50.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 19.)*

Sir,

*India Office, January 18, 1906.*

IN continuation of Sir H. Walpole's letter of the 30th ultimo on the subject of the precautionary measures to be taken in view of the existing state of affairs in Persia, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose, for the information of Secretary Sir E. Grey, a copy of a telegram from the Government of India, dated the 11th instant,\* reporting the steps which they have taken to meet the wishes of His Majesty's Government.

Sir E. Grey will observe that the Government of India regard with some apprehension the prospect of sending small detached parties of troops across Persia, and contemplate the possibility that more extensive measures might be required in certain eventualities.

With reference to Mr. Villiers' letter of the 8th instant on the subject of the proposed establishment of a dépôt for arms at Robat, I am also to inclose a copy of a further telegram from the Government of India, dated the 12th instant,\* in which they point out that it will be impossible to take the necessary steps without the knowledge of the Persian Government.

In these circumstances, Mr. Morley would suggest, for Sir E. Grey's consideration, that it might be well to instruct His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires to intimate to the Persian Government that His Majesty's Government have considered it necessary to take precautionary measures within their own border to prevent disturbances and to protect British interests.

He would also recommend that His Majesty's Legation at Tehran should be instructed to keep the Government of India fully and promptly informed of all changes in the political situation in Persia, with a view to all due precautions being taken, in the event of its being found necessary to strengthen the guards at Tehran or elsewhere, for the safety of the detachments dispatched for the purpose.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[2395]

No. 51.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 19.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 19th instant, relative to the plague in Seistan.

*India Office, January 19, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 51.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*January 19, 1906.*

YOUR telegram of the 16th instant. Consul in Seistan reports that the disease which has broken out in Seistan is true bubonic plague of virulent type; that many villages round the eastern shore of Hamun and to the south of Nasratabad are infected, and that over 100, probably nearer 200, fatal cases have occurred. There is great objection to establishment by Russians, whether jointly or otherwise, of a military cordon in Seistan in addition to the one which they already have at Turbat-i-Haidari. It seems desirable, therefore, that a strong effort should be made to keep control in our own hands, or in the hands of the Persians. We should in any case insist that in southern and western Seistan there must be no interference on the part of the Russians. As regards medical officers, the Indian doctor attached to our Consulate in Seistan is



already on the spot; Dr. Abbas Ali, who is at Birjand, is starting for Bandan without delay; and a hospital assistant is being sent to Koh-i-Malik Siah from Saindak, on the Quetta-Nushki route. We propose in addition to send up a British doctor and another hospital assistant, and these, with the doctor of the Indo Telegraph Company at Nasratabad-ispe, whose services Macpherson has asked Grant Duff to endeavour to secure for purposes of quarantine at that place, will complete the medical aid required. In order to be prepared for any eventualities, since we must send at least as many men as the Russians if the latter insist on establishing an additional military cordon, we propose to dispatch immediately to Koh-i-Malik Siah the double company of native infantry to which reference was made in my telegram of the 12th instant. They would be under the command of British officers, and would take with them the rifles for our Consulates at Seistan and Meshed.

There has been regrettable delay in reporting this matter, owing to Robat not being connected by telegraph with Nasratabad.

As regard Afghanistan, I am addressing Ameer and inviting him to co-operate.  
(Repeated to Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran and Consul in Seistan.)

[2482]

No. 52.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1906.)*

(No. 271.)

Sir,

Tehran, December 21, 1905.

IN obedience with the instructions contained in the Marquess of Lansdowne's telegram No. 87 of the 28th ultimo, I addressed to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh the note, copy of which I have the honour to inclose, regarding the agreement come to between Mr. Preece, His Majesty's Consul-General at Ispahan, and the Bakhtiari Chiefs, relative to the exploitation of naphtha in their territory.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 52.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

Your Excellency,

December 11, 1905.

IT will be in your recollection that in the year 1901 the Government of His Imperial Majesty the Shah granted to Mr. W. K. D'Arcy the special and exclusive privilege to exploit petroleum throughout the whole extent of the Persian Empire, except in certain provinces of the north, for a term of sixty years.

Your Excellency will also remember that the terms of Article 3 of Mr. D'Arcy's Concession give him the right of acquiring all and any other lands and buildings necessary for his operations, with the consent of the proprietors, on such conditions as may be arranged between him and them without their being allowed to make demands of a nature to surcharge the prices ordinarily current for lands situate in their respective localities.

As the Persian Government is aware, large deposits of petroleum are believed to exist on the lands belonging to the Bakhtiari, and Mr. D'Arcy and the Company he has formed have entered into the inclosed Agreement with the Bakhtiari Chiefs, who claimed that their consent was necessary before the Company could engage in operations on the property held by the tribe. The Company, desirous to avoid delays and complications, did not dispute this claim, but settled the matter with the Khans on the lines described in the inclosed document. As the Company deemed it to be their duty to bring the said arrangement to the knowledge of the Shah as Sovereign and grantor of the Concession, I am instructed by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State to inform your Excellency of its purport, and to request you to be so good as to take note of it.

I avail, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

\* Not printed.

[2420]

No. 53.

*Sir C. Hardinge to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20.)*

(No. 32.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 6, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to report that I arrived in St. Petersburg yesterday. The town presented its usual peaceful aspect, with indications of festive preparations for the celebration of Christmas Day to-morrow, large numbers of Christmas trees being in the streets for sale.

I at once called upon Count Lamsdorff, and handed to his Excellency an official request to be received in audience by the Emperor so as to present to His Majesty the letter from the King announcing my recall.

It was tacitly agreed that any discussion of political questions should be postponed until another occasion, and I therefore called again on Count Lamsdorff to-day and had an hour's friendly conversation with his Excellency.

I told Count Lamsdorff that the day before I left London I had the pleasure of seeing Count Benckendorff, and that his Excellency had given me some notes in his own handwriting from which it appeared that the Russian Government had received information from their Minister in China to the effect that His Majesty's Government were negotiating a Treaty with the Chinese Government relating to Thibet, which would be in contravention with the repeated assurances of Lord Lansdowne as to the intentions of His Majesty's Government. The substance of the information given by M. Pokhotiloff proved, however, to be purely imaginary and to have no foundation whatever, and it was evident that he had been made the victim of a deception. I gave Count Lamsdorff a short account of what had taken place and of how the negotiations for the conclusion of a Treaty of Adhesion had failed, and I assured him that our situation in Thibet remained the same as at the conclusion of the Convention which had been ratified on the 11th November, 1904, and subsequently published.

His Excellency thanked me for the information, and stated that the reports sent by M. Pokhotiloff had appeared to him somewhat vague and improbable, but that he had thought it best to court a contradiction from His Majesty's Government, since there was a certain party in Russia who regarded with jealous suspicion any modification of the *status quo* in Thibet, where Russian interests were, however, of a purely religious nature. He expressed his satisfaction that this report has been thus disposed of.

I remarked to Count Lamsdorff that there appeared to me to be some strange agency at work endeavouring to create a sense of distrust between the two Governments, for, while these baseless reports were being transmitted from China, still more absurd stories had been recently repeated from Constantinople of an extension of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to the Near East with a view to modifying the international situation in the Straits of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus. Such stories were really too grotesque to require serious contradiction, and it was only from the Russian Government that such an incredible suggestion had been heard. It was, however, far better in these cases to frankly ask for information from His Majesty's Government and so to prevent the possibility of distrust being created by the intrigues of a third party, and I expressed the hope that Count Benckendorff would invariably in such cases address himself to you or to me when I have taken up my duties at the Foreign Office, and thus prevent the possibility of any misunderstandings.

Count Lamsdorff replied that he had been completely mystified by this information, which he had received in circumstantial detail from more than one source, and that he had warned the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople to unravel the mystery and to endeavour to ascertain the object and the origin of this palpable intrigue. He entirely agreed as to the expediency of a frank interchange of information between the two Governments as the best means of frustrating the manoeuvres of those who wished to create mischief, and he expressed his confidence that in such a manner the unity of aim of the two countries would gradually become apparent to all parties, and that those differences which had existed in the past would likewise disappear.

To this remark I replied that I had been very much struck during my recent absence in England by the change in public opinion towards Russia and by the warm sympathy generally felt towards her during the serious crisis through which she had been passing. I had been particularly impressed at hearing prayers offered up in a small country church a few weeks ago for the restoration of peace and tranquillity in Russia, and I regarded such an incident as an indication of the feeling of all classes.

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I felt that after your conversation with Count Benckendorff on the 13th ultimo it was hardly necessary for me to repeat that His Majesty's Government would resume with pleasure at a suitable moment the negotiations for a general understanding on all questions which had unfortunately been interrupted by the outbreak of the war, and, as a proof of the *bona fides* of the intentions of His Majesty's Government, I reminded his Excellency of your statement of your desire to avoid any action which might be interpreted as taking advantage of the embarrassments of the Russian Government or which might prejudice the success of the negotiations later. I remarked, however, that when you had talked to me on this subject before I left London you had distinctly stated that you expected an attitude of reciprocity on the part of the Russian Government, and that no attempt would in the meantime be made by them to modify the *status quo* in Persia or elsewhere. I said that Persia had been particularly mentioned since it was known to His Majesty's Government that the Persian Government had made an application some time ago to the Russian Government for a loan of money, and that the loan had not been accepted owing to the onerous nature of the conditions imposed. The Persian Government had thereupon applied to His Majesty's Government, and I knew that you were strongly opposed to granting the Persian Government any money at all, and that you had written to the Prime Minister in that sense.

Count Lamsdorff replied that it was quite true that an application for a loan had been made some time ago by the Persian Government, but that he was very averse to giving them any more money, as it was simply throwing money away. He fully appreciated the value of your message to Count Benckendorff, and assured me that he gladly undertook to assume an attitude of reciprocity. He stated that there was no fear at present of any policy of adventure being adopted in Persia or elsewhere.

I observed that it was not so much the action of officials or the Ministry for Foreign Affairs which was to be feared as that of persons such as M. Grube, who, though belonging to the Ministry of Finance, acted in Persia quite independently of the Russian Legation.

Count Lamsdorff assured me that with the present Minister of Finance I need feel no alarm on that score, and that it was not likely that anything would now be done in Persia without his being previously consulted.

I further mentioned that the only possible eventuality by which His Majesty's Government might unwillingly be forced to deviate from their present policy of inaction would be in the case of a fanatical outbreak in the South of Persia against the Christians, when it might become necessary to protect British subjects in the South, and more particularly in the ports of the Persian Gulf. Proofs of the imminence of such an outbreak were not, however, conclusive.

He said that such an outbreak would constitute a common danger, and no objection could be raised to the adoption of requisite precautions to crush it at once.

Count Lamsdorff finally expressed to me his great satisfaction at hearing what I had told him of the friendly sympathy manifested in England towards Russia, which he interpreted as the result of a higher culture than that which prevails in this country, and as a recognition of the necessity of a strong Russia as a counterpoise in the European system. He regarded the improvement in the relations of the two countries as a most happy and welcome omen for the future.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) CHARLES HARDINGE

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No. 54.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1906.)*

(No. 267. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, December 20, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Isfahan, inclosing reports regarding—

1. The present state of the Bakhtiari tribe.
2. The Ahwaz-Isfahan Road.
3. The negotiations with the Bakhtiari Khans for the exploitation of naphtha in their territory.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 54.

*Consul-General Preece to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 66.)

Sir,

Isfahan, November 27, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to forward to you herewith the following reports on my late visit to the Bakhtiari country, viz. :—

1. Report on state of the Bakhtiaris.
2. Report on the Ahwaz-Isfahan Road.
3. Report on the negotiations with the Chiefs of the Bakhtiari tribes for the exploitation of naphtha in their country.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) J. R. PREECE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 54.

*Report on the state of the Bakhtiaris.*

DURING the course of the last three years the Bakhtiaris have suffered the loss by death of two of their chief men. Isfendiar Khan Sirdar Assad, Ilkhani of the tribes, the eldest son of the late Haji Houssein Kuli Khan, who for a space of some twelve years as Eel Beggi, and then, on the death of Haji Imam Kuli Khan, as Eel Khaneh, had by his great tact and judgment kept not only the tribes in order, but also kept the peace between his own numerous brothers and cousins so that, at his death in 1902, he left the tribes in such a prosperous and peaceful condition as they had never previously known. He was succeeded by his cousin, the Sipahdar (afterwards Sirdar Mufakam), eldest son of Haji Imam Kuli Khan, also a strong man. The Samsam-es-Sultaneh, Isfandiar Khan's brother, becoming Eel Beggi in place of the Sipahdar. In the meantime, it would appear that since the death of Isfandiar Khan, Haji Ali Kuli Khan had been somewhat disturbing the internal peace of the tribes by his intrigues, causing the Eel Khane and Eel Beggi to write to the supreme Government asking for an order exiling him from the Bakhtiari country. This request only got to Tehran after the death of the Sirdar Mufakam in the spring of this year, when Haji Ali Kuli Khan was on his way to Tehran.

The Government nominated Samsam-es-Sultaneh as Eel Khane and Shahab-es-Sultaneh, the late Eel Khane's brother, as Eel Beggi, continuing the procedure of the last few years.

These appointments occasioned an access of jealousy in Haji Ali Kuli Khan, mainly against his brother, the Samsam-es-Sultaneh. This was much accentuated by the Prime Minister showing him the letter above referred to. He got himself made Sirdar Assad, the title of his late brother, and utilized his stay in Tehran to get the Government to address themselves to him with regard to various affairs of the tribes, and so worked to undermine the power and authority of the two Chiefs.

The supreme Government were not slow to note their chance of breaking the power of the Bakhtiari Khans, and are continually addressing messages and letters to him with regard to tribal affairs, and so widening the breach between the two parties.

These parties are now made up in the following way :—

Samsam-es-Saltaneh, Eel Khane ..	..	Brother of Haji Ali Kuli Khan.
Shahab-es-Saltaneh, Eel Beggi.	..	
Sarum-ul-Mulk ..	..	Brother of Shahab-es-Saltaneh.
Mein-i-Humayum ..	..	Ditto.
Ali Adbai Khan ..	..	Ditto.
Morteza Kuli Khan ..	..	Son of Samsam-es-Saltaneh.
Munazem-ul-Mulk ..	..	Second son of late Sirdar Assad.

Against these are arranged :—

Haji Ali Kuli Khan ..	..	Sirdar Assad.
Salar Arfa ..	..	His brother.
Ittizad es-Sultan ..	..	Ditto.
Muntazam ed Dowleh ..	..	Eldest son of late Sirdar Assad.

Haji Ali Kuli Khan is a man who is absolutely eaten up with conceit, his belief in himself and in his capacity to govern the tribes has always been very great. His long sojourn in Tehran and his friendship with the Amin-es-Sultan, the late Prime Minister, together with a short visit to Europe in 1901, gives him advantages not possessed by the other Khans according to his own ideas, and thus generally the private "I" is pushed very much too prominently before the public eye. To hear him talk, one would think that he alone is capable of governing the tribes. It is true that he is to a certain extent more clever than the two Chiefs, but he discounts all this by smoking opium and drinking arrack, &c., very heavily, and goes to bed drunk almost every night of his life, so that it is often very late in the day before he is equal to work, and even then he is not over keen about it. It struck me that his sentiments towards us had become considerably modified, and were not nearly as pronounced as they were. I would point out here that he was the *deus ex machina* as regards the Ahwaz-Isfahan Road. To account for this cooling off, I learn that, when in Tehran, he became very great friends with the Russian Colonel of Cossacks. Any way, I found him not only obstructive as regards the Naphtha Agreement, but also in various other ways, and had not the Eel Khane and Eel Beggi insisted upon his coming to an arrangement with me on the subject, the matter would have fallen through altogether. As it was, after having come to a definite arrangement with me, he at the last tried to frighten the above Chiefs into declining to sign the Agreement. Haji Ali Kuli Khan had received the Shah's permission to visit Europe, but he now declines to avail himself of it, preferring to remain in Chahar Mehal during the winter, and generally inconveniencing the Chiefs and probably setting the whole of the tribes by the ears. I pointed out to him and to his brother, the Salar Arfa, what a disastrous course he was following, and that he was surely going the way to completely wreck the prosperity of themselves and the tribes; he saw all that quite clearly, but his brother and his cousin were incapable, and they must be upset.

These two Chiefs, the Eel Khane and Eel Beggi see quite clearly the rocks ahead on which Haji Ali Kuli Khan is trying to drive them. They want to avoid them if they can, and with this idea they are both about to pay Tehran a visit so as to show themselves to the Shah and the Prime Minister and also to try and undo some of the harm done them by Haji Ali Kuli Khan. This proceeding to Tehran is a matter of very grave offence to Haji Ali Kuli Khan and his brothers. Equally the Eel Khane and Eel Beggi, knowing that Haji Ali Kuli Khan has many powerful friends in Tehran, are very fearful that some trick may be played them and that they may be kept in Tehran as hostages. But notwithstanding these fears, they are going to start in about a month's time for the capital.

As I have already had the honour to point out, it was owing to their insistence that the Agreement for the exploitation of naphtha was carried out. They fully realized how it would enhance their position in the south-west and would draw the bonds between the Bakhtiari tribes and His Majesty's Government closer, secure them from undue interference by the supreme Government and carry on the policy which has been quietly developed during the last few years. Altogether, a more far-seeing and truer line of policy for themselves and the benefit of the tribes than that of Haji Ali Kuli Khan, which will throw the tribes back into a state of anarchy and lawlessness similar to what they were in after his father's murder.

Under these circumstances I would venture to respectfully suggest that His Majesty's Legation should give these Chiefs, when in Tehran, all the moral and material support they can, should they require it, with a view of keeping the tribes in their present state of contentment and prosperity, even if it is necessary to the exiling of Haji Ali Kuli Khan. This line will materially help the well-being of the Ahwaz-Isfahan Road and the operations of the Concessions Syndicate for the exploitation of naphtha.

(Signed) J. R. PREECE.

November 24, 1905.

#### *Report on the Ahwaz-Isfahan Road.*

During the last two years robberies on the Ahwaz-Isfahan Road by men from the Kuhgelu tribe have been somewhat frequent, and although the Bakhtiari Khans have complained of these robberies, the Central Government have done nothing. All the Khans asked for was an order from the Central Government allowing them, in

accordance with their original concession, to follow up and capture the robbers where ever they were found. Without such an order they seem afraid to act, as the Kuhgelus are a tribe of Fars, and this would have brought them into conflict with the Governor-General of Fars, the Shoa-es-Saltaneh, the second son of the Shah. As these robberies were allowed to go unpunished last year and the previous year, the Kuhgelus have become more daring and several robberies of considerable magnitude have occurred during this summer, so that the Bakhtiari Chiefs are beyond measure incensed at the state of affairs; to add to their discontent, the Government ignores their complaints, put forward through His Majesty's Legation, but wires to them that the Legation are complaining of them and the robberies of Messrs. Lynch's goods and why do they not pay up, that they must do so at once, and that a Commissioner is on his way to investigate the cases, thus completely reversing the situation.

As I told you in my telegram No. 40 of the 22nd October, the Khans unless they obtain redress, and are allowed to pursue the robbers, propose to declare the road unsafe and shut it up for caravan traffic. Such was what Haji Ali Kuli Khan told me more than once was their intention, but just before leaving Chahar Mehal, Samsam-es-Saltaneh, the Eel Khane, said he did not approve of such a drastic measure and that he would try to stop the robberies by increasing the "tufangchis" on the road. I may point out here that the question of the Kuhgelus now assumes an additional importance as the Concessions Syndicate will commence work near Ram Hormuz, only some 8 miles from their country.

These robberies rendered the Khans most sensitive on the road question in every way. It is a matter of much regret to me that, with reference to the 3,000 tomans, which they had agreed to give Messrs. Lynch Brothers to repair the road, there seems to have been a double mistake. In the first place, Messrs. Lynch's letter, inclosed in Legation despatch No. 12 of the 3rd May, 1905, owing to my going on leave, appears not to have been communicated to the Khans. Then, when the Khans offered to Messrs. Lynch's agent this amount, he declined to receive it. I have tried to persuade the Khans to pay the 3,000 tomans in the coming year, plus the 1,000 tomans for 1906, but they decline to entertain the idea, nor will they now pay in even the 1,000 tomans, as they say they can repair the road themselves at a much less cost than would be incurred by Messrs. Lynch.

I informed them that the road was now managed by the Persian Transport Company and had three Directors to look after it, Mr. Lynch being one of the Directors. I had been asked at home by Mr. Lynch and Colonel Picot to see if it were not possible to get the Chiefs to hand over the working of the road to the Persian Transport Company, that they should take the tolls, and, after setting apart a sum for repairs of the road, bridges, &c., and cost of men, &c., and hand over the balance to the Khans, or else to buy the road right out from the Bakhtiaris. The Chiefs explained that, owing to the way they utilized the road to take their taxes out of the tribes, and the inextricable way this and the levying of the road tax was mixed up, it was quite impossible to entertain the idea that to sell the road was to sell themselves, and was not to be thought of.

At the present moment the general outlook for this road is not too bright, but things will go on in the same old way if the robberies by the Kuhgelus are stopped.

Should it happen that in the future Haji Ali Kuli Khan comes out as Eel Khane, I can only suggest that Colonel Picot, who is a very great friend of his, and stands very well with him, should go out to the Bakhtiari country and see him. It is more than probable that he may succeed in making a satisfactory arrangement with him for the well-being of the road.

(Signed) J. R. PREECE.

November 24, 1905.

#### *Telegram from the Atabeg to Sirdar Assad.*

According to what the British Legation state, besides the robbery which took place some time ago on the Bakhtiari Road, and of which a copy of the things robbed was sent to you by the Foreign Office, and which you have not recovered yet, again, lately, a few loads of cloth and loaf sugar, and a sum of money in cash, &c., have been robbed by the Kuhgelu tribes on the Bakhtiari Road, and you have not taken any steps at all to recover them. This matter has been brought to the notice of His Majesty, and has made His Majesty very angry, and he has ordered that I should tell



you that, notwithstanding the strict orders which have always been given about the security of the road, and especially when you were taking leave, why should the road be so insecure? Then what is the use of you, who are the Eel Khane of the Bakhtiari tribes, and very powerful, and who are responsible to the Government? It is clear, when the security of the road is in your charge, if they come from any other place and district and commit robberies, you have to be called to account; and how is it possible that you should not know who the thieves and robbers are, and from which tribe they have been? In any case, your duty is to follow and capture them and take back the things stolen, and not to fold your hands and bring forward the excuse that the robbers have come from other districts, and that it has no connection with your administration, and so to neglect your work and be the cause of complaints. Anyhow, according to His Majesty's orders, a special Commissioner has been sent from here. After the arrival of the Commissioner, you must, according to the copy which the Foreign Office will send you, give him the value of the things in full; and afterwards also, if any robbery is to occur, whether the robbers be from the Kuhgelu tribes or other places, you have to follow them up, and when you follow their track to the end of your district, you have to stop your horsemen there and immediately inform us who the robbers are, and to which tribe they belong, and where they have gone. After you inform us, instructions will be given without delay for following and capturing them. And, according to this arrangement, if another time I hear anything about the disorder of that place, or if any complaint be made by the British Legation on this subject, you will be severely called to account and be seriously responsible. According to His Majesty's orders, the value of the things robbed up to date is to be paid without excuses. The Special Commissioner has been appointed and sent to take the compensation as soon as possible and to inform us.

*Telegram from the Atabeg to Sirdar Assad.*

According to what the British Legation say and from information received, two loads of cloth and two loads of loaf sugar belonging to Lynch and Co., and some other things belonging to muleteers, their value being 2,865 tomans, have been robbed between Sarkhan and Dupulan; also sixteen mules and four donkeys, and a quantity of merchandize, have been robbed at Pul Amarat. According to His Majesty's orders, it has been decided that the local authorities are responsible for robberies, whether the robber belong to the district or come from other places and commit a robbery. The duty of the local authorities is to capture them and to take back the robbed things. Therefore, without fail, recover either what has been taken or else their value, and speedily give them to their owners, and inform me of the result as soon as possible.

*Report on the Negotiations with the Chiefs of the Bakhtiari Tribes for the Exploitation of Naphtha in their Country.*

When I returned to Isfahan from leave, on the 28th September, I already learnt that the state of affairs prevailing among the Bakhtiari Chiefs was very different to what I had left it in the spring of the year, and it became evident to me that it would prove no easy job to induce them to accept terms to open up their country to the exploring parties of the Syndicate for the exploitation of naphtha which would be at all acceptable to the Company. When I got to Shalamzar, the village of the Eel Khane, Samsam-es-Saltaneh, I found all the Khans assembled there, with the exception of the Haji Ali Kuli Khan. Unfortunately, owing to the illness of the Moin-i-Humayum and his wife, the Shahab-es-Saltaneh had to leave next day for Ardal. The lady died before he got there.

The Shahab-es-Saltaneh's absence from the conferences was a great loss to me, as he is my great friend and the one on whom I mainly relied for support. However, I had two long talks with the Samsam-es-Saltaneh and the Shahab-es-Saltaneh, and had the question of boring for naphtha well in train with them before the latter had to leave. Had I only had to deal with these two Chiefs I should have arranged the whole thing in two or three days, very much on the lines sanctioned by the Company; but in the evening Haji Ali Kuli Khan appeared on the scene like a whirlwind, and swept all the previous arrangements away. He was elected their spokesman, and all

the arrangements afterwards made were done with him. He commenced by agreeing to the money terms, but only for guards, &c., stating that the Chiefs would not lease a yard of their country for money, but that they must be partners in the concern. He then began talking of 20 per cent. of the profits and suchlike nonsense. It was a very difficult matter keeping one's temper with him—especially for me, as I was extremely ill—as his manner was extremely offensive. He particularly was objectionable over the watch and gun which, owing to the kindness of Lord Lansdowne, I had presented to the Eel Khane and Eel Beggi on the part of His Majesty's Government, and which had been accepted with much effusion by those persons; but the Haji dilated on the point that the Chiefs of the Bakhtiari were able to buy such things for themselves, and that he had arranged with Sir Arthur Hardinge that for the future such presents should not be given; that if His Majesty's Government wished to do the Khans honour they might send them decorations. They would be appreciated and would have some use—not like those which had been distributed wholesale in Tehran among a worthless lot of people, who could never be of any use to His Majesty's Government, like the Bakhtiari might be. This subject was referred to again and again in the various talks I had with the Haji.

However, to return to the question of agreement. I pointed out to him that his proposal was absurd, and that last year only 10 per cent. had been asked for.

After a discussion lasting over four days and a removal from Shalamzar to Janagun, their proposals were at last reduced to the limited money terms and 5 per cent. of fully paid up ordinary shares of all shares issued in any Companies created to work naphtha in the Bakhtiari country. They have great faith in the capacity of their oil-bearing country; they think that Baku will be nothing to it in comparison. They continually dwelt on this point. They describe the oil-belt as being about 100 miles long by about from 8 miles to 12 miles broad, running in a north-westerly direction from east of Ram Hormuz to north-east of Shuster. There is one place known as Maidan-i-Man Naftan (the plain of much naphtha) to the east of Shuster, which is full of naphtha according to them.

However, we had got to a working agreement, which was wired home for acceptance. The terms seemed to me to be fairly good ones, and very much better than I ever expected to get at one time. The reply was a long time in coming, and I was continually working at the Chiefs, telling them that I did not think that their proposal would be agreed to.

During this time also the two Chiefs made Haji Ali Kuli Khan understand that, out of consideration for me and to accentuate their friendship, he must come to some arrangement, so that when Mr. D'Arcy's reply came, insisting on a limit of shares, the Haji was in a more pliant state.

On learning the refusal of the terms, he at first proposed to take 5 per cent. of shares up to 200,000L., and 2½ per cent. on the balance issued. They would not listen to a limit; that conveyed the idea to their minds of an attempt to get to windward of them. Ultimately, at my suggestion, they agreed to accept 3 per cent. all round without any limit, and at that figure the agreement was concluded.

I may frankly say that I am beyond measure surprised at getting such good terms from the Chiefs. Three per cent. to a Persian is next door to nothing when you take into account that they get 12 per cent., 16 per cent., 20 per cent. for their money with good security. Then, again, they have but the very crudest ideas of Companies, shares, and such like things. The questions they put to me to answer were most embarrassing at times.

After I sent off my wire proposing the 3 per cent. terms the whole affair was nearly upset. After making all the arrangements and accepting the Agreement, Article by Article, Haji Ali Kuli Khan took himself off to his village of Janagun, whence I had returned a few days previous. Before leaving he, in front of a good number of the tribesmen, fired a parting shot into the other Chiefs who had not yet signed the Agreement, saying, "If you want to sign this Agreement do so, but you are creating a very dangerous situation for yourselves and the tribes." This frightened the two Chiefs and they wanted to withdraw. It was with much difficulty that I made them understand that Haji Ali Kuli Khan was only playing them a trick for his own ends, and induced them to see the thing in a proper light and sign the Agreement, which at last they did. It was only after two days' hard work that Haji Ali Kuli Khan was also got to sign, and so the Agreement was completed.

I was never more pleased in my life, as I did not think I was ever going to bring it off, and on such advantageous terms. I am much beholden to the Chiefs for their consideration of me. They knew that I was ill and suffering, and so gave in to

me on many points. It was very hard work in the state I was to keep a level head and an equitable temper, but I am glad to say that I succeeded in doing so, and finally got all I wanted.

I left Shahamzar two days after the Agreement was signed, bringing with me at the request of the Eel Khane, their copy of the Agreement, which he wished registered in the books of this Consulate. I have the honour to attach herewith a translation of the Agreement.

(Signed) J. R. PREECE.

November 27, 1905.

Inclosure 3 in No. 54.

*Agreement between Messrs. W. K. D'Arcy and the Concessions Syndicate (Limited), with the Bakhtiari Khans regarding the Right to Drill for Petroleum on the Lands of the latter.*

(Translation.)

THE following is a translation of the Agreement entered into between the following two parties:—

The first party being W. K. D'Arcy, Esq., and those associated with him in the Oil Concession granted him by His Imperial Majesty the Shah of Persia; the second party being the Chiefs of the Bakhtiari tribe, and is included in the six following paragraphs:—

1. The first party has the right, for a period of five years from the date of signing this Agreement, to make all examinations, borings, inquiries, and investigations necessary for the finding of oil in the Bakhtiari country, and the said first party can make such highways, roads, and pipe-lines in connection with this business as he may think necessary and expedient.

Also the said first party can build dwelling-houses, store buildings, workshops, &c., as he may think necessary for the carrying out of his work.

The Chiefs of the Bakhtiari tribe will give free of cost all uncultivated ground required for this work, but ground required on which to build houses for the men to live in, should it be cultivated either by men as of irrigation or by rain-water, the first party must pay for at the usual price for such land current at the time.

Wherever the first party may form a permanent camp, he should build also near by two towers in which ten guards can live. Should any difference of opinion exist on the subject of the price to be paid for such land, the question must be referred to His Britannic Majesty's Consul, Mohammerah, and the head of the guards appointed by the second party, and their decision must be final.

The second party, in consideration of an annual payment of 2,000l., undertake to appoint guards on the road and guards to watch the houses, buildings, and dwellings and structures of every kind, and afford necessary protection for those who are working and drilling, and all workmen and employes of the first party who may be engaged in the execution of his work.

This Agreement takes effect from, and remains in force till the first party commence work, and till they stop work respectively in the lands of the Bakhtiari, and if the first party stop work before the expiry of five years, the second party has no right to ask payment on this account, but so long as the first party work, so long will the above sum be paid by him to the second party, quarterly in advance, the first quarter's payment being made on this Agreement being signed.

In consideration of this payment the second party is responsible for any robbery which may happen or loss or damage which may occur through the men of the Bakhtiari tribe or others in the Bakhtiari country, to the employes of the first party, or to the houses, workshops, machinery, and property of the people in the camp, and every sort of loss which may happen in the Bakhtiari country the second party undertake to pay compensation.

It is incumbent on the agents of the first party that they keep all money locked in iron cash safes and in a safe place.

Until the finding of oil the second party will appoint two gangs of guards for the two places on which drilling is to be done, and place them at the disposal of the first party, and, on oil being found, as many gangs of guards as may be required to

guard the various spots where drilling may be done will be supplied by the second party, and due protection afforded.

2. It is hereby agreed that if oil be found sufficient in quantity and of good quality in the lands of the Bakhtiari, and the first party proceeds to refine and trade in it, the terms of the first section of this Agreement will be binding so long as the Concession under which the first party is working, continues in force.

After the pipe-line for the conveyance of oil be laid to convey the oil to the refinery, and the oil be ready to pass through the said pipes, the first party agrees to pay to the second party 1,000l. per year, quarterly in advance, so that the quarterly payment will then be 3,000/4 in advance for the safe guarding of pipe-lines, roads, houses, and property in the camps as above agreed.

Further also, after the formation of one or more companies to work oil in the Bakhtiari country, and after the oil is passed through the pipes, the first party undertakes to give to the second party 3 per cent. of all the ordinary shares issued, which shares must be fully paid up.

3. If the existing springs of oil be spoilt by the work of the first party and be of no further use, the said first party agrees to compensate the second party. In the event of dispute in respect of the amount of this compensation, His Britannic Majesty's Consul at Isfahan shall be Arbitrator.

4. The second party is bound to appoint special and respectable chiefs or heads of guards, who will control both guards and Persian workmen employed on the work of the first party, and should the guards, workmen, or Persian employes become lazy in their work, they shall punish them after advising the Agent of the first party, and make them work, and not allow them to cause trouble in future.

In any case, they have to serve honestly, giving satisfaction to the first party, and to guard efficiently.

5. The payment made by the first party to the second party of this Agreement is for the specific purposes mentioned above, but should the employes of the second party fail in their duties, the first party has the right to ask compensation for any loss, after reporting to His Britannic Majesty's Consul, Isfahan, this Agreement still holding good.

The second party is responsible, and will deal with any people who cause trouble in not accepting the terms of this Agreement.

6. After the expiration of the period of the Concession granted by His Imperial Majesty the Shah, such buildings as were the property of the first party will then belong to the second party.

All the contents of the Contract written above is correct.

(Signed) SAMSAM-ES-SALTANEH.

All the contents of the Contract written above is correct.

(Signed) SHAHIB-ES-SALTANEH.  
SIRDAR ASSAD.  
ALI KULI, Bakhtiari.  
NASI, ditto.  
SARAM-UL-MULK.

Before me, T. E. Samsam-es-Saltaneh, Sirdar Assad, Shadar-es-Saltaneh, and Sarum-ul-Mulk, signed this Agreement, and with their own seals and in their own handwriting, signed and sealed it. 15th November, 1905, A.D.

(Signed and sealed) MOHAMMED TAKI,  
Amin-i-Sharia.

Note.—The Amin-i-Sharia is first Munshi of this Consulate.—J. R. PREECE.

By the power of attorney granted to us by William Knox D'Arcy, Esq., and the Concessions Syndicate (Limited), we, duly authorized, sign this document.

(Signed) J. R. PREECE, His Britannic Majesty's  
Consul-General, Isfahan.  
GEO. B. REYNOLDS, Memb. Inst. C.E.

[2479]

No. 55.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1906.)*

(No. 268.)

Sir,

*Tehran, December 20, 1905.*

IN accordance with the instructions contained in the Marquess of Lansdowne's despatch No. 147 of the 20th October last, I have the honour to transmit herewith a report drawn up by Mr. Preece, His Majesty's Consul-General at Ispahan, regarding the present state of the Bakhtiari road.

You will see that the account given by Mr. Preece of the condition of the track differs considerably from that given by Mr. Parry, Messrs. Lynch's agent, in his letter from Ahwaz, dated the 21st August last (see Lord Lansdowne's despatch No. 147 of the 20th October last).

It must be remembered that no road in Persia is ever in what an English engineer would consider a satisfactory condition. If left to Persian supervision, all that one can hope to obtain is a track which, if annually repaired in the worst places, is sufficiently good to allow caravan traffic without positive danger to the muleteers or camelmen and their beasts.

Mr. Preece thinks that on the whole the Bakhtiari road is in a fair state, and that the 3,000 tomans down, *plus* 1,000 tomans a-year which the Chiefs proposed to spend in repairs, would have kept it in a reasonably good condition. I understand that the offer made by the Chiefs has now been withdrawn. As regards the robberies on the road, I have already had the honour to report in my telegram No. 167 of the 3rd instant that a Mamur has been sent to recover the stolen goods and punish the perpetrators. The Mushir-ed-Dowleh has also verbally informed me that in future the Bakhtiaris will be allowed to pursue the Kuhgelu robbers as far as the limits of the Bakhtiari territory, after which the Governor of the province, in which the thieves take refuge, will be made responsible for their apprehension.

Mr. Preece informs me that the principal Bakhtiari Khans will arrive here at an early date, and I shall then do my best to obtain the erection of the caravanserais which they have undertaken to construct at Jaru, Alwani, and Wais. The caravan-serai at Malamir is already practically completed.

I shall also do what I can to induce them to renew their offer of 3,000 tomans down and 1,000 tomans a-year for the upkeep of the road.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 55.

*Consul-General Preece to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 70.)

Sir,

*Ispahan, December 2, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 34 of the 24th ultimo inclosing in original a despatch, No. 147 of the 20th October from Lord Lansdowne, returned herewith.

You will have received my despatch No. 66 of the 27th ultimo inclosing a Report on the Ahwaz-Ispahan road which largely anticipates your request for a full report on the matter. I may, however, supplement this report by some observations amplifying it.

The letter of the Persian Transport Company of the 9th October last is very controversial, but it does not appear to me that any good result would obtain by replying to it.

Mr. Parry's Report is a careful one on the state of the road, and according to his lights, made, I take it from my knowledge of Mr. Parry, in perfect good faith; but I must point out that, as far as I am aware, his experience of hill roads is so small: this is only the second time he has been over this road, and that is the sum, I believe, of his travelling in Persia or thereabouts, so that his dictum must be somewhat freely discounted. I will not quote my thirty-seven years' experience in Persian roads, but rely on Mr. Reynolds who has done some little travelling in Persia and Baluchistan, and who thinks that the whole road is a good caravan road, and Mr. Stainton, of the Telegraph Department, who thinks that the road from Dopalan to Janagum via the Tangi Darkesh Warkesh is an excellent specimen of a hill road; the part through the

Tang is so good, that, but for the zig-zags, you might drive a carriage all along it. Mr. Stainton has twenty-seven years' experience of travelling in Persia. He says that this road is a much better one than the Shiraz-Bushire one. Both he and Mr. Reynolds travelled over this road in October, so it is likely that the Chiefs were right when they said that they had put the road in repair. With regard to the portion called Girmiseh, I particularly questioned Mr. Stainton about it, and he could not say that he thought any part of it was dangerous. Whether we, who have been used to travelling in Persia, are more callous than new-comers like Mr. Parry to these mountain roads, or that the road has been put in better order, must now remain an open question, but I am inclined to think that it is the former, and what Mr. Parry calls perfunctory appears to us quite adequate. Anyway, should such places be carried away, as Mr. Parry appears to anticipate may happen with the places repaired by the Chiefs; I imagine the charvadar or muleteers would themselves at once repair it, at least that is what would happen on the Bushire road.

At Gandum Kar, I am told by the Chiefs, they have the intention to make a village and put people into it so as to try and keep the road open during the winter months across the Barahmordeh Pass. They also say that they will put a caravanserai there.

With reference to the Shalil Gorge, the road is made in the alluvial soil of the hill side, cut out of the hill in fact, and consequently must be affected by the spring rains; there is no remedying this except by building a road out from the slope of the hill in stone. Mr. Parry is quite correct: this wants attention annually, even bi-annually.

With reference to what Mr. Parry calls "Kulmut" I must refer you to my Report of last year. I have nothing to add to it (*vide* my No. 56 of the 28th December, 1904).

The crossing at the "Chesme Roghani" is really not worth mentioning; as a rule there is scarcely a trickle of water in the stream, which even in flood will not be more than 4 feet wide, and of no great depth.

The Jaen descent, when I went over it last year, certainly would have been the better for repair, but I should not call its state deplorable.

With reference to the accommodation on the road at various places mentioned by Mr. Parry, his information is not too accurate, for I am told that at Bistagan there is a caravanserai; at Khaverukh there are four; at Shalamzar there is one, also at Naghun. With reference to Jaru-Alwanieh and Wais, the Khans have again promised me that they will set about building caravanserais at once. Individual Chiefs propose putting building in hand in the coming year at places such as Karaghi and Aidal. This is a matter which will quickly develop as the road gets used. The fear of drought in the "Garmisir" stopping the due progress of the road must always be borne in mind, and it is this which is really the crucial question regarding the due development of the road. If the charvadars and camelmen could but find adequate supplies at fair prices at all times procurable on this road, they would very soon take to it, and would not mind the state of the tract. As a matter of fact, they do not mind it. I have made very searching inquiries of them, and could not gather that they had complaints to make about the road, but I heard very many complaints as to the difficulty of getting proper supplies; but it is very easy for Messrs. Lynch's agents, by putting leading questions to the charvadars, to draw from them the answers they require; but, as a matter of fact, from Chahar Mahal to Jaru there is not a really dangerous spot on the road from the charvadars' point of view.

Mr. Parry gives the earnings from tolls for various years, but he does not say, as is the case, that these earnings are a mixture of road takings and tribal tax, and cannot be separated. All the same, the progress of the road is very marked, and the Khans can very well afford paying for its upkeep. I had many talks with them on the subject, but judged it better not to press them too much on the question, as they were extremely sensitive and sore owing to the robberies by the Kuhgelu, and on this point I would draw your attention to the telegram sent by the Prime Minister to Hajji Ali Kuli Khan. The whole telegram is a bit weak, but the following is pure nonsense:—

"And afterwards also, if any robbery is to occur, whether they be from the Kuhgelu tribes or others, you have to follow them, and when you follow their track to the end of your district you have to stop your horsemen there, and immediately inform us who the robbers are, and to which tribe they belong, and where they are gone. After you inform us, instructions will be given without delay for following and capturing them."



From this message one would suppose that there were telegraph stations along the whole border in communication with the Chiefs, instead of it being necessary for a mounted man to go and communicate all this information, if he has acquired it; and, unless the horsemen can catch up with the robbers, I do not see how they are to get all the necessary information. Then for the Chiefs, supposing they are at Chahar Mahal, to send a message to Ispahan and get it to Tehran will take another three or four days, so that in this way a week may easily elapse; the same period being given for the reply to be given, a fortnight will have passed. What will have become of the robbers and the stuff robbed? Naturally, they will disappear; and that is what the Government expect. Such messages are simply meant to throw dust in our eyes. I most respectfully submit that the right the Bakhtiaris have, according to their original concession, to follow up the robbers and take them wherever they may be found, should be conceded them, and, if not given freely, should be insisted on.

It may interest you to know, as showing that the Chiefs were not entirely opposed to this road question, and have consideration for Messrs. Lynch, that I was able to recover, through them, two sums of 910 and 990 krans advanced by Messrs. Lynch to camelmén, in my opinion somewhat injudiciously. The former sum was recovered from a man who was directly supported by the Zil-es-Sultan, at the instigation of the Munshi Bashi and Aga Nejefy, and is a very distinct score for this Consulate.

In a previous Report I have had the honour to inform you that the two Chiefs, Samsan-es-Sultaneh and Shahab-es-Sultaneh, are about to proceed to Tehran. I have but little doubt that if all goes well with them up there you will have no difficulty in inducing them to devote a certain sum of money to repairs to the road, especially if, owing to the action of His Majesty's Legation, they have acquired the right to punish the Kuhgelus. The whole matter will very much turn on this one point.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) J. R. PREECE.

[2632] No. 56.

*Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 22.)*

(No. 24.)  
Sir,

*Constantinople, January 17, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum relative to an encounter between Ottoman troops and Kurds on the Turco-Persian frontier.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 56.

*Consul Shipley to Sir N. O'Connor.*

(No. 35.)  
Sir,

*Erzeroum, December 26, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency the occurrence some ten or twelve days ago of the following incident on the Turco-Persian frontier near Kazli-Gol, in the Bayezid Sandjak of the vilayet: From such details as I have been able to obtain it would appear that a Kurdish tribe dwelling on the Persian side of the frontier had made encroachments on the pasturage claimed by another part of the same tribe in Turkish territory, and had in fact driven the latter back as far as the village of Bashkent, close to the above-mentioned Kazli-Gol, where, however, they were stopped by a small Turkish garrison stationed at the latter place. There was, it appears, a rather sharp encounter between the troops and the tribe above alluded to, in which two of the former and some six or seven of the latter were killed.

His Excellency Nazim Pasha, in the course of a conversation which I had with him on the above subject, complained to me somewhat of the continual encroachments on Turkish territory of these Persian tribes, and stated that on his arrival in the vilayet some four years ago he had, in order to put a limit to them, found it

necessary to establish a garrison at the very village of Bashkent, the scene of the encounter above referred to. His Excellency further added that in his opinion one of the chief causes of these recurring incidents was to be found in the fact that sufficient provision did not appear to have been made by the Persian Government to keep its Kurdish subjects in proper check. He had, however, reported very fully on the matter to Constantinople with a view of something being done to arrive at a definite settlement of these frontier difficulties.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

[2751] No. 57.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 22.)*

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 22, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

“Condition of Fars.

“Following from His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz:—

“‘The situation here remains the same. High Commissioner is expected on the 24th instant. Small numbers of malcontents from outlying districts are arriving in the city.’”

[2769] No. 58.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 23.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 20th January, relative to the Southern Customs of Persia.

*India Office, January 22, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 58.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*January 20, 1906.*

PLEASE refer to my telegram of the 9th instant as to the Persian loan. Telegraphic report from Resident in Persian Gulf gives 24,90,367 rupees as the total revenue from Southern Customs, including Charbar and Mohammerah, for the calendar year 1905.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

[2836] No. 59.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 23.)*

(No. 23.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 23, 1906.*

FOLLOWING sent to Seistan, and repeated to India:—

“The Director of Customs in Seistan has been appointed by the Grand Vizier President of the Sanitary Council in that province, and the doctors of the British and Russian Consulates members. With them will be associated two local Persian doctors.”



[2935]

No. 60.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 23.)*

(No. 16.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*St. Petersburg, January 23, 1906.*

WITH reference to Mr. Grant Duff's telegram No. 20 of the 13th instant, regarding the outbreak of plague in Seistan, I am informed by the Director of the First Department of the Russian Foreign Office that the local Russian authorities had ordered strong precautionary measures to be taken (by which I understood that a military cordon might be intended) since the outbreak was of a particularly violent description.

[2383]

No. 61.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 15.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, January 23, 1906.*

WITH reference to the Viceroy's telegram of the 11th instant, repeated to you, the Government of India should be kept fully and promptly informed of any changes in the political situation, with a view to all precautions being taken to insure the safety of detachments which might have to be sent to strengthen the guards at Tehran or at other places.

If the Persian Government make inquiries as to the dispatch of a force to Robat, you should reply that it is a precautionary measure in view of the outbreak of plague in Seistan, and in order to render them any assistance they may require.

[2229]

No. 62.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 6.)

Sir,

*Foreign Office, January 23, 1906.*

WITH reference to Sir A. Hardinge's despatch No. 59 of the 20th March, 1905, I transmit to you herewith copy of a letter from the India Office relative to the claim of the British India Steam Navigation Company against the Persian Government, on account of the detention of the steam-ship "Kassara" at Bushire in December 1904.\*

You will observe that the Secretary of State for India expresses the opinion, in which I concur, that it is not necessary that the claim should be further pressed upon the Persian Government.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[619]

No. 63.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, January 23, 1906.*

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, asking for his views as to the proposal made by Sir A. Hardinge that either His Majesty's Consul at Turbat-i-Haidari or some other British Consular officer should proceed on a yearly tour to Astrabad in order to report to His Majesty's Legation at Tehran on affairs in that province.

Sir A. Hardinge, who has been consulted in accordance with the suggestion of the Government of India, states as his opinion that, although the Russian authorities would probably dislike the proposed annual visit, they could not well resent it or regard it as unfriendly, as there is already a British Vice-Consul for Astrabad, although he is prevented from even visiting the district by his duties as Imperial Bank Manager at Resht.

\* No. 47.

I am to request that you will inform Mr. Secretary Morley that Sir E. Grey concurs in the opinion expressed by Sir A. Hardinge, and that he is disposed to view the proposal with favour.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GORST.

[2279]

No. 64.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, January 24, 1906.*

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant, relative to the claim of the British India Steam Navigation Company against the Persian Government on account of the detention of the steam-ship "Kassara" at Bushire in December 1904.

I am to inform you that Sir E. Grey concurs in the opinion of the Secretary of State for India that the claim need not be further pressed upon the Persian Government, and that instructions will be sent to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran accordingly.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GORST.

[3083]

No. 65.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 25.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 23rd January, relative to an attack on the British post at Nobat Dakhin.

*India Office, January 25, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 65.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*January 23, 1906.*

WE have received the following telegram, dated the 20th instant, from Resident at Aden through Government of Bombay:—

"Party of about twenty men fired upon our post at Nobat Dakhin for about half-an-hour on the night of the 18th instant. According to information recently received there were fortunately no casualties, except the following wounded: one camel contractor's agent, one camel man, and four labourers."

[3105]

No. 66.

*Mr. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 25.)*

(No. 24.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 25, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to Government of India, who have been requested to repeat it to Bushire:—

"Bahrein. Sir A. Hardinge's despatch No. 180 and my despatch No. 262 of the 7th December.

"Following are the terms of the reply which I have received from the Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Sir A. Hardinge's note of the 22nd August, 1905:—

"Bahrein is considered by the Persian Government to be their unquestionable property, and its inhabitants to be Persian subjects. And yet, although they expected

that in a case of emergency they would, in accordance with Treaties, receive every assistance from a friendly Power, they see that all steps taken by English officers have, contrary to the Treaties of 1809, 1814, and 1857, had no other object but to establish their own authority in territory which is the *bona fide* property of the Persian Government, and to undermine the allegiance to that Government of the Sheikhs and people of Bahrein. Both at Tehran and in London frequent representations and protests have been made, but in spite of the fact that no exception has been taken by the British Government to the ownership and sovereignty of Persia over Bahrein, the enforcement of Persian legal rights there has not been allowed by the British Government. A proof of this policy of compromising the rights of Persia over her ancient subjects is given in the proposal contained in the note under reply, that the British Consul-General should intervene on behalf of inhabitants of Bahrein, who are Persian subjects. Further proof of this spirit is given by the granting of the title of "Sheikh," by the conclusion of Treaties with the individual thus designated, and by attributing the ownership of Bahrein to him.

"It should be the earnest desire of the British Government to confirm the allegiance of the Shah's subjects (see Article XIV of Treaty of 1857), and the Persian Government are obliged to protest against their action in the present question, which amounts to interference with their lawful territory, and they request His Majesty's Government not to lose sight of their Treaty obligations regarding the Shah's subjects."

"I await your instructions as to whether I should refuse to receive this note, the tone of which appears to me open to objection, although the language used is not actually uncivil."

"For some time past the tone of communications addressed to the Legations here has been growing less civil, and at Court it is openly said that the Western Powers have been shown by Japan what Orientals are capable of. Cases of discourtesy to British officials have, as you are aware, occurred on several occasions this autumn, and it is, in my opinion, most important that we should promptly check anything approaching impertinence on the part of the Persian Government."

[3106]

No. 67.

*Mr. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 25.)*

(No. 25.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 25, 1906.

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

"Condition of Fars.

"His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz telegraphs as follows:—

"I was informed this evening by an emissary of Mirza Ibrahim that, unless the High Commissioner prove to be new Governor-General, the malcontents propose to take sanctuary in this Consulate immediately on his arrival on the 26th January. He asked whether the Legation would give them up in the event of the Shah demanding their surrender.

"I stated, in reply, that persons entering a British Consulate only leave it of their own free will, but begged that the malcontents should wait till I had paid my first visit to the High Commissioner before taking the action proposed.

"I submit that the Persian Government should now declare their intention.

"It seems that the Shoa-es-Saltaneh has not yet left France."

"I have replied to His Majesty's Consul as follows:—

"Your language as regards the surrender of refugees in the Consulate is approved. You should, however, do your utmost to discourage the malcontents from taking refuge in the Consulate; but if they insist upon doing so, you cannot refuse to receive them."

[2420]

No. 68.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Spring-Rice.*

(No. 54.)

Sir,

*Foreign Office, January 25, 1906.*

I HAVE received Sir C. Hardinge's despatch No. 32 of the 6th instant, in which his Excellency reports a conversation with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs on various questions affecting Great Britain and Russia and the mutual relations of the two countries.

Sir C. Hardinge's language to Count Lamsdorff on this occasion is approved by His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[3124]

No. 69.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 26.)*

Sir,

*India Office, January 25, 1906.*

WITH reference to my letter of the 18th instant, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to invite the attention of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the telegrams from the Viceroy of the 19th and 25th instant, as to the measures to be taken in connection with the outbreak of plague in Seistan. (A copy of the latter telegram is herewith inclosed.)

Mr. Morley proposes to approve the action of the Government of India in respect of the medical assistance which they are sending to the spot. But, as regards the immediate dispatch to Robat of the double company of native infantry, he would be glad to be informed whether, in Sir Edward Grey's opinion, there is any objection to the troops being authorized to start at once, as proposed by the Government of India.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 69.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*January 25, 1906.*

MY telegram of the 12th instant regarding plague in Seistan. We have received a further telegram from His Majesty's Consul in Seistan, in which, having regard to the general unrest prevailing in country, and to the probability of plague measures giving rise to further excitement, he presses for dispatch of detachment of regulars to Robat, and for an increase of guard of Seistan Consulate. We consider dispatch of double company of infantry with rifles to Robat is all that is immediately required, and solicit early authority for this.

(Repeated to Tehran and Seistan.)

[3166]

No. 70.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 26.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 24th instant, relative to the proposed loan to Persia.

*India Office, January 26, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 70.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*India Office, January 24, 1906.*

PROPOSED loan to Persian Government. Your telegram of the 9th instant. After further consultation with Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and full consideration of the arguments in favour of the proposal, I have arrived at the conclusion that loan should not be made. His Majesty's Government are of opinion that loan would not permanently benefit Persia in her present condition, and that sole object of granting it would be to obtain concessions which, whether regarded in themselves or as a means of resisting Russian influence in Southern Persia, would prove of doubtful value in the long run. No doubt it is fairly certain that Persia will apply elsewhere for a loan, but we have strong grounds for feeling assured that application will be refused at any rate for an indefinite time. In these circumstances His Majesty's Government cannot think that it is advisable that funds for purpose of a loan to Persia should be provided out of Indian revenues.

[3368]

No. 71.

*India Office to Foreign Office.--(Received January 27.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 27th January, relative to the plague in Seistan.

*India Office, January 27, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 71.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*January 27, 1906.*

MY telegram of the 19th instant: Seistan.

Consul reports that direction of plague arrangements has been intrusted by Grand Vizier to Molitor, who has assumed executive functions, though Grand Vizier insists on Ihti-Sham retaining supreme control. At request of Molitor our hospital assistant has started on another tour of inspection in infected area. Russian doctor, though fact of being European gives him an advantage over our hospital assistant, has not obtained any special predominance as yet. Ill-feeling against us as introducers of plague is being assiduously stirred up by Russians. We have secured services of Clemenger, the Indo-European Telegraph Company's doctor.

[3106]

No. 72.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 19.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, January 27, 1906.*

MALCONTENTS at Shiraz.

I approve your action as reported in your telegram No. 25 of the 25th instant.

[3622]

No. 73.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.--(Received January 29.)*

(No. 28.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 29, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

“Urmi affairs. My despatch No. 1 of 1st January.

“In their reply to our joint note, the Persian Government state that owing to their frontier dispute with Turkey they are unable to take active measures against the Kurds, but that Commissioners have been sent to try to induce the Kurds to come in to Urmi for their trial. In the opinion of the American Minister and myself, this is merely a pretext for again delaying the matter. With regard to the Gough incident, the Persian Government have addressed a note to me saying that no attack was made upon him, but that he galloped towards the Kurds, who, thinking that he was pursuing them, fired at him. Gough did not gallop towards the Kurds, and I have informed the Persian Government that, even if he had done so, I am astonished that this should be thought by the Persian Government to constitute a reasonable excuse for firing at a British Consul. In view of the replies that we have received, both the American Minister and I think that an audience of the Shah or Grand Vizier would serve no useful purpose. The whole case has been referred to the State Department by the American Minister for instructions. I propose, with your sanction, to instruct Mr. Wratislaw to return to Tabreez, as we think his continued stay at Urmi useless. The safety of the Christians will not, in his opinion, be affected by his withdrawal.

“I beg that I may be instructed as to the attitude I should adopt in view of the obstinate and unreasonable attitude of the Persian Government.”

[3623]

No. 74.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.--(Received January 29.)*

(No. 29.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 29, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

“Condition of Fars.

“His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz has had a cordial interview with the High Commissioner, who has now arrived there, and has promised to give a definite answer on the 3rd February as to the Governor-General's return.

“Violence is threatened by the populace if the dismissal of the Prince is not granted. The town was quiet yesterday, but was in an uproar on the day before.”

[3743]

No. 75.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.--(Received January 30.)*

(No. 30.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 30, 1906.*

HIS Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed telegraphs as follows:—

“On the 24th January Captain Smyth was informed at Askabad by General Officer Commanding Trans-Caspia that he was sending 150 Russian Cossacks from Pulkhatun with doctors to Turbat-i-Jam in connection with a supposed outbreak of plague in that neighbourhood. This is a palpable excuse, for the Russian doctor at Karez has stated that the disease is diphtheria. I would suggest that we should threaten to establish a permanent cordon in Seistan under His Majesty's Consul.

“Should Consulate doctor be sent to Turbat-i-Jam to investigate?

“I am asking the Persian Government whether they have any knowledge of this.”

[3622]

No. 76.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 20.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

URUMIA murders.

*Foreign Office, January 30, 1906.*

If you consider it desirable you may authorize Consul-General to return to Tabreez as proposed in your telegram No. 28 of yesterday, but your despatch No. 1 has not yet been received.

[3105]

No. 77.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, January 30, 1906.*

WITH reference to my letter of the 13th instant, I transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, reporting the reply of the Persian Government to the representations made by His Majesty's Legation at Tehran regarding the status of Bahreinese in Persia.

It will be observed that the Persian Government claim Bahrein and its inhabitants as the unquestionable property and subjects of the Shah, and refuse to entertain the proposal that the British Resident at Bushire should be permitted to use his good offices on behalf of the Bahreinese.

Sir E. Grey considers that the present opportunity should be taken of informing the Persian Government that their claims to the island are entirely inadmissible, and of asserting the British right to protect its inhabitants. He therefore proposes, if Mr. Secretary Morley concurs, to instruct Mr. Grant Duff to reply in the sense of the inclosed draft telegram,† but he would be glad to be favoured with any observations or suggestions which Mr. Morley may have to make on the subject.

I am, &amp;c.

(Signed) E. GORST.

[3124]

No. 78.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, January 30, 1906.*

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th instant, regarding the measures to be taken in connection with the outbreak of plague in Seistan.

Sir E. Grey concurs in the proposal of the Secretary of State for India to approve the action of the Government of India in respect to the medical assistance which they are sending to the spot, and sees no objection to the immediate dispatch of a force to Robat, as suggested by the Viceroy.

I am, &amp;c.

(Signed) E. GORST.

[3756]

No. 79.

*Board of Trade to Foreign Office.—(Received January 31.)*

Sir,

*Board of Trade, January 29, 1906.*

I AM directed by the Board of Trade to advert to previous correspondence on the subject of a report that a service of motor-cars is to be established by the Russian Government on certain roads in North Persia, and especially to your letter of the 11th October last forwarding print of a despatch from Sir A. Hardinge, with inclosure, relative to the suggestion that a British service of motor-cars should be established as a countermove in Southern Persia.

\* No. 66.

† No. 126.

In this connection, I am to transmit herewith, for Sir E. Grey's information, notes of an interview between Mr. Stanley, of this Department, and Mr. Maclean, who recently conducted a commercial inquiry in Persia on behalf of the Commercial Intelligence Committee of the Board of Trade. Mr. Maclean, who is now the London Manager of the Persian Transport Company, is not very hopeful as to the possibilities of motor traction in Persia at the present day. It will be seen, however, that he is in favour of a road being constructed, as proposed by Major Sykes, from Bunder Abbas to Rigan or Bam, but rather with a view to opening up Eastern and North-Eastern Persia to British trade than as a route to Ispahan and Tehran. It should be added that the Persian Transport Company has a concession for the carriage of goods via the River Kuren and Shuster to Ispahan and Tehran.

I am to suggest, subject to Sir E. Grey's approval, that the Memorandum of Mr. Stanley's conversation with Mr. Maclean should be transmitted to the India Office, as that Department is chiefly concerned in this matter.

I am, &amp;c.

(Signed) H. LLEWELLYN SMITH.

Inclosure in No. 79.

*Memorandum respecting an Interview with Mr. Maclean.*

(Confidential.)

I HAVE seen Mr. Maclean about this matter and have shown him the despatches on C 5117 and C 5165. Mr. Maclean is now the London Manager of the Russian Transport Company. Briefly, his opinion on the points raised by the despatches is as follows:—

1. The Persian Transport Company holds concessions enabling it to conduct the transport of goods into Persia by way of the Karun River. The goods enter at Mohammerah and are taken by river-steamers inland as far as Ahwaz. At this place they are transhipped, owing to difficulties of navigation, but are again carried by the river beyond Ahwaz as far as Shuster. From this point they are carried by road to Ispahan, and so on to Tehran if requisite, whence they are distributed to northern markets. Otherwise they are distributed to central markets from Ispahan.

2. The Company controls the great road southward from Tehran as far as Kum.

3. From a glance at a map it will be seen that the concessions held and worked by the Company, as already described, enable it to reach the real productive districts and consuming markets of Persia better than by any other route.

4. The central portion of Persia is a high table-land almost entirely unproductive and very sparsely populated. The road below Kum, through Yezd to Kerman, is controlled by the Sani-ed-Dowleh. It is not a bad "road" (for Persia) as things go, once the central plateau is reached, but it takes some reaching, especially from the southern end. Mr. Maclean has not been over the road, but he would be disposed to doubt whether it is in quite such good condition as Major Sykes thinks it. His opinion is that it would require a considerable outlay to make it fit for motor traffic.

5. A road, as proposed, from Bunder Abbas to Bam or Rigan is feasible, but it would cost a good deal to make it, to keep it in repair, and to police it. It would also cost a good deal to improve the existing track between those places and Kerman; and when all this has been done, the distance by this route to Tehran, and the time occupied in traversing it, would render it comparatively useless from a trade and transport point of view. It might, perhaps, be used with advantage for fragile goods, such as earthenware and glass and goods in respect of which delivery to specified time is of little or no object. As to local traffic to feed the road, there would be next to none.

6. I gather that Mr. Maclean would not be disposed to recommend his Directors to spend money in these directions, or in any way to adopt for themselves the suggestions made in the despatches. Nevertheless, he (and they) would be glad to see the plan proposed adopted by some other British agency, because it would enable goods of the nature above referred to to reach their destination more safely, and at less cost, perhaps, than by the route they now have to follow. (The road from Shuster to Ispahan is mountainous and difficult. It would also tend towards the general development of Persia, an object which could not but be agreeable to his Company. As a trade route to the best Persian markets, however,

[1618]

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it could not compete with that already in use by his Company, with all its imperfections as regards transshipments and the difficulties of the land transport.

7. Mr. Maclean thinks well of the proposal to construct a road from Bunder Abbas to Bam or Rigan, however, for a reason apart from those assigned in the despatches as to its usefulness, and that is as a possible opening for British enterprise to reach Eastern and North-Eastern Persia, especially the latter. This district is much more fertile than the central area. It is at present almost untapped, either by ourselves or by the Russians, and it has considerable undeveloped possibilities. He thinks that for commercial purposes such a route would be preferable to the Scistan route through India or Baluchistan, which appears to be favoured by the Indian Government. The road would certainly have to be continued beyond Bam or Rigan, but, if made, it would have more chance of paying as a means of reaching the districts referred to than as a means of reaching Tehran and other northern markets.

8. Mr. Maclean is also of opinion that the time of motor traction in Persia is not yet. It has barely "arrived" even here and on the continent, and conditions in Persia are not in any degree to be compared with those obtaining in European countries. The country is one of immense distances, being equal in area to France, Germany, Austria, and Hungary combined; it is very thinly populated, it is very mountainous, a great portion of it is barren desert, and its so-called "roads" are virtually only mule-tracks, quite unfitted for wheeled traffic, and altogether unsafe in respect of persons and property.

9. As mentioned in his Confidential Report, however, he thinks a good deal might be done to improve conditions for trade along the Gulf littoral, and especially by improving the "roads" inland from ports like Bunder Abbas. He thinks the British or Indian Governments, or both, would do well to interest themselves in this matter as the best means of combating Russian influence in the north, and that it is well worth their consideration whether they could not lend diplomatic, and even financial, support to any Company formed to carry out these objects.

10. So far as he is aware, the Persian Transport Company would be indisposed to embark in the venture.

January 13, 1906.

(Initialled) G. S.

[3754]

No. 80.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 31.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 27th January, relative to unrest in the Aden Hinterland.

Copies will be sent to the Director of Military Operations.

*India Office, January 30, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 80.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

January 27, 1906.

ADEN. My telegram of the 23rd instant.

We have received two further telegrams, dated the 23rd January, from the Government of Bombay. In the first of these they refer to their telegram No. 596 of the 23rd instant, and report that Resident at Aden telegraphed on the 16th instant to the effect that postal runner had been shot near Sheikh Othman, and the mail which he was conveying robbed; that assailants were reported to be Attifi tribe of Subailis; and that matter was being inquired into.

In the second telegram the Government of Bombay refer to their telegram of the 21st instant, and repeat a telegram from the Resident at Aden, to the effect that attack at Nobat Dakhin was delivered at Commissariat inclosure; that assailants belonged to a nomadic clan numbering about sixty men, a sub-tribe of Subaili;

and that it was rumoured that a few of them had been killed or wounded. Resident stated that circumstances were not yet fully known, and promised to send further particulars as soon as received. He was of opinion that incident had no connection with mail-bag robbery, but was probably connected with the relations between Abdali and Haushabi tribes.

[3840]

No. 81.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 31.)*

(No. 31.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 31, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

"His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz telegraphs as follows:—

"(Secret.)

"Prince Shoa-es-Sultaneh telegraphed from Vienna on 27th January:—"Shall arrive at Baku on the 9th." This, presumably, means the 9th of the Mahomedan month, i.e., the 3rd February.

"If the Persian Government further delays giving a definite answer, the populace, which is exasperated by their previous procrastination, may become dangerous.

"Firing has almost all ceased, but the shops are more strictly closed than ever.

"The Ulema threaten that if the Shoa-es-Sultaneh is confirmed in his office they will leave Shiraz in a body."

"I recommend that we should officially intervene if the Prince is maintained, but I doubt whether he will be."

[3845]

No. 82.

*Mr. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 31.)*

(No. 32.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 31, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

"Persian loan: Your telegram No. 16.

"I am informed by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh that an immediate loan is absolutely necessary for the Persian Government. Overtures have been made, I hear on good authority, to the Russian Legation.

"The position of the Grand Vizier depends on whether he can raise money, and is very uncertain. I am informed by the Administrator of Customs that the state of the finances becomes more critical daily.

"If the Persian Government undertook to place the entire control of any money lent in English hands, would you be prepared to reconsider refusal to make an advance?

"I suspect that the Mushir's son, whom his father is sending to see me on Saturday, may sound me on this point."

[3846]

No. 83.

*Mr. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 31.)*

(No. 33.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 31, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

"Urmi Mullah: Your telegram, No. 6.

"The Shah, the Mushir-ed-Dowleh informs me, is anxious that the Mullah should be allowed to return to Urmi. In return, his Excellency offers to agree to my recent request that two English signallers should be posted at Turbat and Birjand. This request they intended to refuse, on the plea that negotiations for the withdrawal of the Russian signallers are now in progress. Permission will only be accorded now on the condition that, if all the Russian signallers are withdrawn, ours will be withdrawn also.

"I have persuaded the Mushir-ed-Dowleh to make another effort on our behalf for the Kuh-i-Malik Siah extension, which, as his Excellency recently informed me, the Shah had refused to grant.

"If we allow the Mullah to return it will please both the Shah and the Valiahd, and his further retention at Tabreez is now of little importance.

"Although our right to place signallers on the Meshed-Siistan line is doubtless equal to that of the Russians, an arrangement on the above lines would obviate delay, and might be of assistance to us in other ways.

"Do you approve such an arrangement?"

[3930]

No. 84.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Persian Minister.—(Communicated to Foreign Office, February 1.)*

(Translation.)

(Telegraphic.)

January 31, 1906.

YOUR telegram with regard to the discussions you have had with his Excellency Sir Edward Grey in reference to Lahijan and Vazneh has been received. I have also become acquainted with the contents of the Memorandum sent by the British Foreign Office, which was included in that telegram.

The facts have been laid before His Imperial Majesty, who has commanded that you should again seek an interview with his Excellency Sir Edward Grey and explain to him the following particulars and obtain a definite reply:—

The Imperial Government have no objection or aversion whatever to the formation of a Commission. But their object is that the Turks should evacuate the districts occupied by them and that then the Commission be formed for the purpose of inquiring into the disputes between the two Governments. Of course, the Minister for Foreign Affairs would remember that this very frontier question between the two Governments was referred in 1851 to the good offices of the British and Russian Governments, and at that time a Commission was appointed by the four Governments, and this question had almost approached a settlement; but the Turkish authorities delayed and deferred the matter so much, and raised so many difficulties, that the work of the Commission was delayed for almost three years. And the British and Russian Governments, seeing that no progress in the work would be made in this way, the Commission was ordered to draw a map of the disputed frontier so as to settle the question from the map.

After this map had been prepared the Commission of the four Governments was for a long time engaged, in Constantinople, with the discussion of this matter, and by the year 1873, that is, . . . \* after the formation of the Commission, this matter was in the same state as before. Now, again, if the Commission be formed it will be in the same way as the former one, and it may be that this question will again be protracted over a period of some twenty years and be both a source of trouble to His Britannic Majesty's Government, and will keep our affairs thus in suspense. If, however, the Turks will evacuate the districts which have been in our possession and the Commission is formed afterwards, this matter will be settled more speedily. In the Agreement of 1869 it is mentioned that should any difference arise between the Governments of Persia and Turkey in regard to the frontier, they shall leave its solution to the good offices of England and Russia. That is why from the very beginning we referred the matter to His Britannic Majesty's Minister for Foreign Affairs, and we did not expect for a moment that His Britannic Majesty's Government, who would no doubt consider these points, would hold to the view maintained in this manner by the Government of Turkey.

You will by all means communicate these facts to Sir Edward Grey as soon as possible, and you will thoroughly explain the object of the Imperial Government. We have no objection to the formation of a Commission, but it must be formed after the districts which have been occupied have been evacuated. You will obtain from his Excellency a favourable reply, which is necessary on this occasion.

\* This word cannot be deciphered.

[3945]

No. 85.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 1.)*

(No. 34.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 1, 1906.

FOLLOWING repeated to India and Meshed:—

"My telegram No. 30.

"I am informed by the Persian Government that Russian doctor from Puli Khatun went to Turbat-i-Jam and, finding that the disease was diphtheria, returned.

"They know nothing of the rumour that Cossacks are being sent."

[3840]

No. 86.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 21.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 1, 1906.

IF you consider it likely that the Prince will be sent back to Shiraz, as reported in your telegram No. 31 of yesterday, the Persian Government should be informed that we shall hold them responsible for the consequences to British subjects, property, and trade if he returns there.

[3974]

No. 87.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 2.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 30th January, relative to the plague in Seistan.

*India Office, February 1, 1906.*

*Inclosure in No. 87.*

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

January 30, 1906.

YOUR telegrams of the 19th and 25th instant, regarding plague in Seistan.

His Majesty's Government approve of immediate dispatch to Robat of double company of Native infantry with arms for British Consulates. They also approve of your proposals for providing medical assistance.

[3973]

No. 88.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 2.)*

WITH reference to Mr. Grant Duff's telegram No. 30 to Sir E. Grey, dated the 30th ultimo, the Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 1st instant, relative to the supposed outbreak of plague near Turbat Jam.

*India Office, February 1, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 88.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.**February 1, 1906.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

MAJOR SYKES telegraphs on the 30th ultimo from Meshed to the effect that Captain Smith, while at Askabad, was informed on the 24th January by the Russian General Officer Commanding in Trans-Caspia that 150 Russian Cossacks are being sent by him with doctors from Pulkhatun in connection with outbreak at Turbat Jam of disease supposed to be plague. Sykes observes that this is a palpable excuse, as the disease is stated by Russian doctor at Karez to be diphtheria. He inquires whether he shall send doctor from Meshed to Turbat Jam, and suggests threatening establishment of a permanent cordon, under British Consul, in Seistan. We have instructed Sykes, in reply, that Meshed Agency doctor should be sent to Turbat-i-Sheikh Jam to investigate, and that any further information that may be available should be reported by telegraph.

[4061]

No. 89.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 2.)*

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*St. Petersburg, February 2, 1906.*

PERSIAN Loan.

With reference to your telegram No. 33 of yesterday's date, I had some conversation with Count Benckendorff, who stated that he was under the impression that it was understood that no advance to Persia should be undertaken either by England or Russia. I imagine that his Excellency based this statement on the conversation between Sir C. Hardinge and Count Lamsdorff, which was reported to you in the despatch No. 32 from the former of the 6th ultimo. I also had some conversation with the Persian Minister at this Court, who is a son of the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and he informed me that he had been summoned to Persia. He had an interview with Count Lamsdorff before his departure, but I was unable to extract any information regarding the loan from him.

I would beg your instructions as to whether I am to say anything to the Russian Government on the subject.

I have reported fully on the above two interviews in letters and despatches sent by messenger on the 31st ultimo.

[3845]

No. 90.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, February 2, 1906.*

NO prospect can be held out of His Majesty's Government reconsidering their decision as to the proposed loan, referred to in your telegram No. 32 of yesterday.

[3931]

No. 91.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 23.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, February 2, 1906.*

MOLESTATION of a witness at Shiraz.

With reference to my telegram No. 13 of the 11th ultimo, the following is the Persian Minister's account of the matter. I should be glad to know if there is any foundation for this statement:—

"During the interrogation of the muleteer by the Vazir, an admission was made by the former that, at the time of the theft, he had left the goods committed to his charge, and was asleep. He further acknowledged that the investigation had been unduly delayed by his omitting to report the case until thirty-three days had elapsed. Punishment for his negligence was therefore inflicted in order to please the Consul, and to insure in future the better protection of British goods."

[3845]

No. 92.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Spring-Rice.*

(No. 34.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, February 2, 1906.*

LOAN. We have informed Mr. Grant Duff, in reply to his telegram No. 32 of yesterday, that our decision to refuse the loan cannot be reconsidered.

Count Lamsdorff should be informed confidentially of the Persian Government's request and of our reply. You should also state that if the Persians make a similar application to the Russian Government we shall expect reciprocity on their part.

Should the Russian Government, however, consider it for any reason desirable to afford financial assistance to Persia, we are quite ready to discuss the matter in a friendly spirit if they will consult us on the subject.

[2478]

No. 93.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 11.)

Sir,

*Foreign Office, February 2, 1906.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 267 of the 20th December, 1905, inclosing a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Ispahan, relative to his recent visit to the Bakhtiari Chiefs, and his negotiations with them on behalf of Mr. W. K. d'Arey and the Concessions Syndicate (Limited), for the exploitation of the oil fields in their territories.

I approve the manner in which Mr. Preece conducted these negotiations, in the face of considerable difficulties, and I have learnt with satisfaction of the conclusion of an Agreement on the subject.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[4125]

No. 94.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3, 1906.)*

(No. 272.)

Sir,

*Tehran, December 23, 1905.*

WITH reference to Lord Lansdowne's telegram of the 18th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of an interesting Report, drawn up by Colonel Douglas, Military Attaché at His Majesty's Legation, regarding the road now being constructed from Kazvin to Hamadan.

A detailed Report on the same subject will be sent in due course to the Military Intelligence Branch at Calcutta.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 91.

*Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 33.)

Sir,

*Tehran, December 20, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a general Report, accompanied by a sketch, on the newly constructed road from Kazvin to Hamadan, over which I travelled at the end of last month.

I am also sending direct to the Intelligence Branch in India a detailed Report, suitable for incorporation in the Persian Route Book.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) J. A. DOUGLAS, Lieutenant-Colonel,  
Military Attaché.

## Inclosure 2 in No. 94.

*Report on the New Road from Kazvin to Hamadan.*

THE road is not yet completed, its present state being as follows:—

The roadway is made throughout; bridges and culverts are finished, with the exception of those over the Mikeya Chai, near the village of Rezan, and over the Kara Su River at Ab-i-Garm; for about 30 miles from the Kazvin end the metal is now being laid, and there are three steam-rollers at work; at the Hamadan end the road is made for about 3 miles out of the city; metal is now being laid for another 5 miles, and two light rollers, drawn by horses, are working there; elsewhere loose metal is lying over half the track, the other half being left free for traffic, and stones are collected in heaps all along the sides of the road ready to be laid; the post-houses are all built, but doors and window frames are not yet finished.

The bridge over the Mikeya Chai is approaching completion, and should be ready by the end of this month; that at Ab-i-Garm has twice already been carried away by sudden floods—once while in process of construction and once when finished; the foundations of a new bridge were laid on the 25th of last month, but when I saw it later, on the 4th December, the workmen had deserted *en masse* and work was at a standstill. I was told that ten more horse-rollers were being sent from Russia, but it will probably be at least a year before the metal is all laid and the road ready to take heavy traffic.

The total distance from Kazvin to Hamadan is 145 miles, and it is divided into the following stages:—

Stage.						Distance in Miles.
1. Kazvin to Kahak ..	..	..	..	..	..	17½
2. Kahak to Nahvand ..	..	..	..	..	..	19½
3. Nahvand to Ab-i-Garm ..	..	..	..	..	..	19
4. Ab-i-Garm to Aveh ..	..	..	..	..	..	11½
5. Aveh to Manian ..	..	..	..	..	..	11
6. Manian to Sirab ..	..	..	..	..	..	12½
7. Sirab to Khiltova ..	..	..	..	..	..	17½
8. Khiltova to Ak Bulak ..	..	..	..	..	..	15½
9. Ak Bulak to Hamadan ..	..	..	..	..	..	14½

At each of these stages is a post-house, substantially built of brick or stone, containing four rooms for the accommodation of travellers, with carriage sheds, stables, and out-houses. When finished the width of the roadway throughout will be 20 feet; width of metalled portion, 15 feet. The method of construction in the plain country has been to dig two ditches 30 feet to 40 feet apart, the earth from these being utilized to make a raised roadway in the centre. Where low-lying cultivation is passed through the ditches are dug deeper and the roadway correspondingly raised, and numerous small bridges and culverts have been made to carry off the irrigation water. In the more hilly parts the construction generally is similar, but the ditches are closer together (25 feet to 30 feet), the roadway is less raised, and where the track is cut out of the hillsides there is a ditch on one side only.

As far as Nahvand (37 miles) the road is practically level; cultivated country has been avoided as much as possible, but there is a good deal between Siah Dahan and Nargeh, and this has entailed the construction of many small bridges and culverts. From Nahvand to Hissar the ground is undulating, and a good deal of cutting and embanking has been done to level the track. Beyond Hissar the valley of the Kara Su River is reached, and the road keeps up the left bank of the stream to Ab-i-Garm, then crosses it, and thence to Aveh post-house follows close along the left bank of the Aveh Chai—a stream which flows between low hills, joining the Kara Su just below Ab-i-Garm. This is all gradual ascent, the total rise from Hissar to Aveh post-house being about 1,100 feet in 24 miles; there are many slight ups and downs, but no steep gradients.

At Aveh post-house the road leaves the valley of the stream, and commences to ascend steeply to the top of the pass; the ascent in the first mile, to Aveh village, is

350 feet, then, more gradual, the total rise to the top being 1,550 feet in 6 miles. On the south side the road follows a small stream which flows down from the pass, descending about 1,000 feet in the first 10 miles; the ground is somewhat undulating, and there are many short rises during the descent, but no severe gradients. 2 miles beyond Manian an open plain, sloping gently southwards to the Kara Chai River, is entered, and the road runs across it in a general direction a little to the west of south for the next 20 miles; when rounding a low isolated range known as the Kuh-i-Takht, it turns sharply westwards and goes up the valley of the Kara Chai to Kurujan, 15 miles further on, the latter part being mostly through cultivation. Crossing the river below the village of Kurujan it again rises over the lower spurs of a range of hills to the south, the rise being 350 feet in the first 5 miles from the bridge; it then descends again gradually for the next 10 miles, when the river is again crossed higher up. From this point into Hamadan (7 miles) the road is practically level, chiefly through cultivated country.

There are four principal bridges, viz.:—

(i.) Over the Kara Su at Ab-i-Garm. (Not yet built.) This will be of stone throughout, three arches each of 45½ feet span; total length of bridge 182 feet.

(ii.) Over the Arvan Chai, near Yurchi. Similar in construction to that at Ab-i-Garm, three arches of about 35 feet span; total length 147 feet.

(iii.) Over the Mikeya Chai, near Rezan. Stone, three arches of 24 feet span; total length 133 feet.

(iv.) Over the Kara Chai, below Kurujan. Brick on stone foundations, five arches of 24 feet span; total length 175 feet.

Where the road again crosses this river, 7 miles from Hamadan, the old Persian bridge of brick, three arches, has been utilized.

The Abhar River, near Nargeh, is crossed by a single arch bridge of about 30 feet span. Besides the above, there are many small single-arch bridges and culverts, all of which appear to be well and solidly constructed and capable of carrying heavy traffic. In some parts, especially in the low hills in the river valley near Hissar, Irish bridges are used to carry off the surface drainage.

The construction of bridges, post-houses, and masonry work generally has nearly all been done by Greek contractors, and the workmen employed for the stone work include many Greeks.

As far as the Rezan Bridge (*i.e.*, for 93 miles) the new road follows generally the line of the old Persian road. From this point the old road goes off in a south-westerly direction, and, turning the Kuh-i-Takht at its north-west end, strikes southwards to Hamadan, the two roads uniting again 8 miles from the city. It is difficult to understand why this new alignment was chosen, as in point of distance the two seem to be almost identically the same, and though the old road crosses a slight rise by the Kuh-i-Takht, this is more than compensated for by its entire avoidance of the low rocky spur traversed by the new road on the south side of the river. Possibly by keeping to a less thickly-populated district a certain amount of economy was effected, but the result is that between Hamadan and Rezan caravans keep entirely to the old line, which has the advantage, wanting at present on the Russian road, of possessing far more villages and caravanserais, where accommodation for the night can be found. This is in fact one of the great drawbacks to the new road, as in the whole distance of 43 miles from Rezan to where the old road is rejoined it is only at Ruan and the few villages near it that shelter can be obtained without going some way off the track.

The rates of toll levied are:—

For a loaded horse, mule, or camel, 1 kran.

For a loaded donkey, 2½ kran.

Caravans which have come from Resht and have already paid toll between there and Kazvin are allowed an abatement, the total toll taken from Resht to Hamadan being 5½ kran. At present the traffic is very small, and during the ten days I was on the road, going and returning, I did not see more than 300 to 400 camels, and perhaps an equal number of mules and donkeys. These were almost all from Resht, and carried chiefly kerosene oil and sugar; but many caravans from Resht go by another, though difficult, road which keeps further to the west and comes into the Safid Rud Valley below Yuzbashi Chai.

There are three toll-houses on the road, one about 6½ miles out of Kazvin, one



at the village of Sultan Bulak near the top of the pass, and a third just outside the town of Hamadan. The first and last are easily avoided, and their takings must be practically nil; but the toll-house at Sultan Bulak must be passed by any one using the road, and the keeper of this told me that his average takings at present amounted to from 5,000 to 8,000 krans a-month. I was unable to obtain any precise information as to what the road has cost so far, but the Enzeli-Tehran Road Company, which has made it, issued for the purpose additional shares to the nominal value of 2,000,000 roubles (200,000*l.*). Under these circumstances it is difficult to see how the road can be anything but a losing speculation, at any rate for some time to come. Probably when completed it will attract a certain amount of fourgon traffic, and there is a talk of introducing motor cars on this as on other Russian roads, but in both cases the severe gradient from Aveh post-house to the top of the pass must limit the weight they will be able to carry. Snow is said to collect in drifts on the south side of the pass, completely blocking it for some weeks during the winter, and a Russian informant told me that last year fifteen men and many animals perished there from exposure.

I was informed by the engineer in charge of the road that there is no intention of introducing a postal service along it at present. He also told me that there is a project for making another branch from Nahvand to Yuzbashi Chai on the Resht-Kazvin road, but this is not likely to be realized in the near future.

From the above Report and a reference to the section of the road on the attached sketch, it will be evident that it has not been made with any intention of converting it into a railway; but in all probability motor cars will eventually be introduced on it.

(Signed) J. A. DOUGLAS, *Lieutenant-Colonel,*  
*Military Attaché.*

*Tehran, December 20, 1905.*

[4126]

No. 95.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3, 1906.)*

(No. 273.)

Sir,

*Tehran, December 26, 1905.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 259 of the 5th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of a note from the Persian Government, stating that orders have been sent to the authorities of Seistan to make a formal apology to His Majesty's Consul at Nasratabad on account of the action of the Yamin-i-Nizam in burning the buildings at Kuhak recently occupied by the Seistan Arbitration Commission.

I have instructed Captain Macpherson to report to me when the Deputy Governor has carried out the Mushir-ed-Dowleh's instructions.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

*Inclosure in No. 95.*

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(Translation.)

*December 23, 1905.*

I HAVE received your note of the 30th ultimo respecting the buildings at Kuhak. As I have already informed you verbally, the proper authorities have been instructed by telegraph to take steps.

[4127]

No. 96.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3, 1906.)*

(No. 274.)

Sir,

*Tehran, December 27, 1905.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 172 of the 11th instant, I have the honour to report that His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Tabreez informed me on the 9th instant that he had received an official communication from the local authorities inclosing a "Dast Khatt," given with the Shah's consent, by the Valiahd granting the Majid-es-Saltaneh permission to proceed to Tiflis, and promising security to his people and property.

The Valiahd has fixed next Saturday for the Majid-es-Saltaneh's departure from here, so that I trust this tiresome question is at length settled.

I have received a letter from the Majid-es-Saltaneh, thanking His Majesty's Government warmly for the protection afforded to him.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

[4129]

No. 97.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3, 1906.)*

(No. 276.)

Sir,

*Tehran, December 28, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a communication which I have received from Lieutenant-Colonel J. A. Douglas, Military Attaché at this Legation, regarding the Cossack Brigade.

I would draw your special attention to the views of Colonel Tchernozouboff as to the attitude his men are likely to assume in case of a popular rising.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

*Inclosure in No. 97.*

*Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 34.)

Sir,

*Tehran, December 27, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report, for your information, that in several conversations which I have lately had with the Russian Officer Commanding the Cossack Brigade, Colonel Tchernozouboff has spoken very openly about the state of his command, which is, from his point of view, eminently unsatisfactory.

The total budget of this brigade amounts to 300,000 tomans (about 50,000*l.*) per annum, of which 60,000 tomans goes in pensions. The whole sum is handed over to the Officer Commanding the brigade, and no accounts are asked for or given. In former years the money has always been regularly paid, but now Colonel Tchernozouboff tells me that he has great difficulty in getting it from the Persian Government, who owe him at present 80,000 tomans (13,500*l.*), and he has been obliged to borrow over 60,000 tomans (10,000*l.*) from the Russian and English Banks on his personal security.

It has always been the custom to allow a proportion of the men of the brigade to go away on furlough during the winter, paying them at a reduced rate. This year an unusually large number are absent, and the total strength of the brigade now serving here is about 200 infantry and a little over 200 mounted men, the latter including three so-called regiments of cavalry and two batteries of artillery.

In addition to these a certain number of the men on furlough are resident in Tehran, and could be called out, if necessary; but I doubt whether, under any circumstances, the brigade could now muster more than from 500 to 600 men.

I also asked Colonel Tchernozouboff how far his men could be trusted to oppose a popular rising, should such take place, and he fully confirms me in the view I have

always held—that in case of an appeal to their religious feelings they could not be relied on. In fact, he gave me plainly as his opinion that they would refuse to fire on a mob accompanied (as in case of any organized demonstration it would certainly be) by mollahs.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) J. A. DOUGLAS, Lieutenant-Colonel,  
Military Attaché.

[4130]

No. 98.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3, 1906.)*

(No. 277.)

Sir,

Tehran, December 28, 1905.

IN my telegram No. 179 of the 22nd instant I had the honour to draw your attention to the possibility of disturbances breaking out in Persia should the present state of Russia continue to exist.

As you are well aware, the weakness of the Central Government in Persia is daily increasing. During the last year there have been riots in Meshed, Shiraz, and Kerman, and an outbreak of disorder at Tabreez during the autumn was only kept in check by the ability of the Nizam-es-Sultanch, Acting Governor-General of Azerbaijan, who is one of the few relatively strong Persian officials now in power. Reports furnished to His Majesty's Government at various times during the last few years by Sir A. Hardinge and myself show that Luristan, Kurdistan, Arabistan, and Fars are in a state of chronic rebellion, while on the Kerman-Bunder Abbas, Bakhtiari, and practically all the southern roads, highway robbery flourishes practically unchecked.

As I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 173 of the 13th instant, there was recently a riot in Tehran, nominally directed against the Ala-ed-Dowleh, the Governor of the town, but really to protest against the misgovernment of the Shah and his Grand Vizier. Most of the prominent Mujtehedes of Tehran openly took the side of the people, and are at present in sanctuary at Shah Abdul Azim, a shrine about 6 miles to the south of the town. The Shah last week sent the Minister of the Court and the Mushir-ed-Dowleh to treat with the mollahs, but the latter refused to return to their homes and grossly insulted His Majesty's emissaries.

It is significant that an Ispahan mollah, Sheikh Jamal, has during Ramazan been openly preaching in one of the principal mosques in the bazaar against the Shah, and recommending the establishment of a Republic, and, as far as I am aware, no effectual steps were taken by the Governor to silence him.

I am informed on good authority that the mollahs at Shah Abdul Azim have demanded—

1. The removal from office of the Grand Vizier and the Governor of Tehran.
2. Free access to the Shah by the humblest of his subjects.
3. Some form of representation of the people.
4. The dismissal of M. Naus and his horde of Belgian Customs officials.

I have not heard yet what answer the Persian Government have returned to these rather peremptory demands.

It is quite certain that the progress of events in Russia is being closely watched and eagerly discussed all over Persia, and, judging by the conditions stated to have been put forward by the mollahs, it would appear that a deep impression has already been produced, and that the more intelligent sections of the people have begun to consider the possibility of obtaining a less utterly inefficient form of Government.

Although there is at present widespread discontent, leading constantly to local disturbances, there is, as far as I am aware, no organized plan for overthrowing the existing Government. The country people are engaged in the daily struggle for food, and are so accustomed to being plundered and ill-treated by the officials and are so apathetic, that for some time to come it is hardly likely that they will join any movement against the established order of things. But it is different in the towns. The town Persian is ignorant, but observant, and by no means stupid. He knows that the Russian people are trying to obtain their freedom, and that the Russian Government are in a position of great difficulty and danger. Till lately Russia,

certainly in this part of Persia, was synonymous with the summit of earthly power. She has now been beaten by land and at sea by a people whose very existence was two years ago scarcely known in Persia. These facts have, I am convinced, made an indelible impression here, and no one can foresee what may be the ultimate result; but there is little doubt that the immediate effect has been to remove the ever present fear of a Russian occupation of the northern provinces in case of a popular rising or anti-Christian agitation.

In these circumstances, as I had the honour to suggest in my telegrams Nos. 179 and 182 of the 22nd and 27th instant respectively, I think it would be a wise precaution if the question of increasing the Legation Guard were carefully considered, due importance being attached to the fact that such a step would irritate the Shah and no doubt temporarily increase the difficulties, already great, with which His Majesty's Representative at Tehran has to contend.

At the same time I wish to make it clear that I do not think Persians in general have any special ill-feeling against Europeans, and I do not consider an attack on the Legations probable while any semblance of power remains with the present authorities. If, however, the misgovernment of the Shah becomes unendurable, and the financial situation increasingly desperate, it is not impossible that His Majesty may be murdered as his father was, and that there might then be a period of anarchy with the outrages and disturbances inherent to such a state.

It should not be lost sight of that the massacres of Mussulmans in the Caucasus have beyond measure enraged the fanatical element present in all Persian towns, and an order from Kerbela and Nejef to retaliate would certainly be followed by an attack on the Armenian quarters. A proportion of the Armenians would almost certainly fly to the Legations for protection, and it is impossible to say what might then happen if the religious prejudices of the mob were thoroughly aroused, and the movement were directed or fomented by popular mollahs or seyeds. I do not believe any Persian soldiers would defend Christians against their countrymen led by mollahs, and I gather from conversations I have had with such people as M. Grube, the Russian Financial Agent, and General Schindler, that my opinion is generally shared by Europeans who know Persia well. I have the honour also to refer you to my despatch No. 276 of the 28th instant, containing a report from Colonel Douglas, stating that Colonel Tchernozouboff, commanding the Cossack Brigade, makes no secret of his distrust of the fidelity of his men in case of a popular rising.

It would, I think, be impolitic to increase the Legation Guard until it becomes more apparent what turn matters here are likely to take. Owing to the secondary rôle Russia is for the present compelled to assume, and perhaps also to the somewhat strong measures I recently felt it my duty to take at Shiraz, I am inclined to think that it is the general impression among Persians in Tehran that His Majesty's Government wish to take the opportunity to adopt a more forward policy in this country. At the same time the obstructive attitude of the Persian Government can hardly be much worse than it is, and I presume that His Majesty's Government would not weigh the safety of British subjects in Tehran and elsewhere against the capricious humour of an irresponsible and utterly incapable Ruler like the present Shah.

As regards further precautions, I think it would be well if His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire were instructed to draw up a scheme for sending up a small force of infantry to Tehran with as little delay as possible, should such a step unfortunately become necessary. It might also be prudent to warn the Admiral Commanding in the East Indies to be ready to send a ship of war to Bushire on receipt of an urgent telegram from His Majesty's Representative at this Court.

If serious disturbances break out they will probably begin at Tabreez and Meshed, where the inhabitants are more fanatical and less cowardly than elsewhere in Persia, and it is fairly certain that timely warning of danger would reach His Majesty's Legation. I do not see what can be done at present to assist His Majesty's Consul-General at those places, but the proposal of the Government of India to dispatch a supply of arms and ammunition, destined for the latter Consulate-General, to the Persian frontier at Kuh-i-Malek Siah (see their telegram of the 15th instant) appears to me unobjectionable.

The difficulty of taking effective steps to protect Europeans, and still more Armenians, in Persia, in case of real danger, is great. The distances are enormous; there is, with Russia in its present condition, no way of escape to a place of safety, and the means of transport are wretched in the extreme. All that I think can at present be done is to have a small force ready for an emergency, and to wait till events here show to some extent what is likely to happen in the near future.

I shall, it is hardly necessary to say, keep His Majesty's Government carefully informed of any fresh developments.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

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No. 99.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3, 1906.)*

(No. 280.)  
Sir,

*Tehran, December 30, 1905.*

IN my despatches Nos. 237 and 254 of the 1st November and 3rd December respectively I had the honour to draw the Marquess of Lansdowne's attention to the anarchy prevailing in Shiraz, and generally in the Province of Fars.

I have the honour to report that the situation in Fars continues most unsatisfactory, and matters have now culminated in a lengthy telegram embodying their grievances sent by the people of Shiraz to all the "chefs de Missions" in Tehran. I have the honour to inclose a translation of this telegram, together with a copy of the note I addressed to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, transmitting it with the request that his Excellency would lay it before the Shah. I at the same time instructed His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz to inform the senders that I had received their communication and would forward it to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I pointed out verbally to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh that it was most regrettable that the people of Shiraz should be driven to lay their grievances before the Diplomatic Corps at the Persian Court. His Excellency admitted that the state of things existing in Fars was intolerable but reminded me that the Vazir Makhsus had been ordered to proceed to Shiraz and take the direction of affairs out of the hands of the present incompetent Deputy Governor. His Excellency had previously sent me a message to this effect by his son who added that the present Governor-General, the Prince Shua-es-Sultanch, would also be dismissed from office.

His Excellency, in reply to a question as to why the people of Shiraz were not at once informed of the decision of the Persian Government, replied that the Shua-es-Sultanch was in Paris, and that if his Highness heard of his dismissal he might refuse to return to Persia and might draw heavy bills on the Persian Treasury, and this in the present impoverished state of the public exchequer would cause great embarrassment.

As I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 178, I propose, should riots of a serious nature break out in Shiraz, to increase the Consular Guard to about fifty men. His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire informs me that he can place about forty men at my disposal in case of an emergency. I shall of course not take such a measure unless it becomes urgently necessary.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 99.

*Inhabitants of Shiraz to Foreign Representatives at Tehran.*

(Translation.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*December 27, 1905.*

AS your Excellencies are aware, some five years ago His Royal Highness the Shoa-es-Sultanch was Governor of Fars, and owing to his great oppression there was a riot here and the Persian Government was obliged to remove him. Two years ago he was reappointed, and before leaving Tehran he guaranteed and took oath in the presence of His Imperial Majesty the Shah to treat the inhabitants of this province with kindness, but owing to his pride, ambition, and extraordinary avarice he forgot this undertaking and began to oppress and tyrannize the people more than ever by imposing tolls and illegal taxes in the districts, although when the new tariff came into force, it was definitely arranged that no imposition under any name should be imposed in the interior of the country. Now contrary to this arrangement, in all villages and districts the Governor is levying taxes, and moreover he has leased out forage on the roads. All these measures are detrimental to trade. An amount equal

to the Government taxes is extorted from the people by force of arms, blackmail, oppression, and depredation. For the last fifty days the inhabitants of this city have given up business and petitioned through the clergy for the suppression of the existing tyranny. Instead of inquiry being made into our complaints, several of our children were killed and wounded by troops by order of the Sardar Akram who is the author of all this oppression. We have so far received no satisfactory reply from His Imperial Majesty the Shah or the Grand Vizier to our repeated complaints. It appears that in view of his relationship with the Governor the Grand Vizier does not allow our petitions to reach the Shah.

The Persian Government did not allow the former Governors such as the Prince Firman Firma, Nizam-es-Sultanah, Ala-ed-Dowleh, Nizam-ul-Mulk, and Asaf-ed-Dowleh who were good to the people and whose intention was to make this province prosperous, to remain here more than six months or a year and they were recalled without any reason, but now although the people are tired of the tyranny and oppression of the present Governor, no attention is paid to our repeated telegraphic petitions. It appears that they do not reach their high destination.

Under these circumstances we request the Representatives of the friendly Powers to inform the Persian Government of our grievances, and to put an end to this unlimited oppression by any means they consider advisable. We have two alternative requests: the Government may either remove the present Governor-General and replace him by one of the former Governors, or they may purchase our movable and immovable property, so that we may leave this province and seek a livelihood elsewhere.

A reply is requested.

Inclosure 2 in No. 99.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

*Tehran, December 28, 1905.*

AS I had the honour to inform your Excellency verbally on the 27th instant, I in common with other Heads of Missions at Tehran have received a telegram from the people of Shiraz embodying their grievances against the Shua-es-Sultanch and his incapable and tyrannical Vazir, the Sardar Akram.

I inclose a copy of this telegram for your Excellency's information and for submission to His Majesty the Shah.

I have, as you are aware, repeatedly during the last few months made friendly representations to the Persian Government regarding the anarchy which has latterly been permitted to exist at Fars, and the injury thereby caused to British interests in that province.

The fact that the people of one of the largest and most celebrated Persian towns should, in order to obtain common justice, be obliged to lay their grievances before the whole of the Corps Diplomatique at the Court of His Majesty the Shah appears to me sufficient proof, if further proof were wanting, that some reform of the Administration of Fars is urgently necessary.

I understood yesterday that your Excellency would lose no time in bringing a copy of the inclosed telegram to His Majesty the Shah's notice, and I trust that immediate steps may be taken to remedy a state of affairs which constitutes a real danger to the State and which is viewed with great regret by all who have the welfare of Persia at heart.

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No. 100.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3, 1906.)*

(No. 284.)  
Sir,

*Tehran, December 31, 1905.*

WITH reference to the Marquess of Lansdowne's telegram No. 89 of the 29th November, I have the honour to transmit herewith a list of the robberies directly affecting British interests which have been brought to the notice of His Majesty's Legation during the last two years as having taken place on the roads in the Province of Fars.\*

\* Not printed.



The list of course only includes those cases which have formed the subject of claims submitted for settlement to His Majesty's Consular officers, and it is impossible to say whether it includes all, or even a fair proportion, of the damage suffered by British traders, since losses of British goods imported by Persian merchants are not included, and it is impossible to obtain any estimate of their extent.

With regard to the question raised by Lord Lansdowne as to the nationality of the owners of the caravans robbed, I have the honour to inform you that, so far as I have been able to ascertain, it is the universal custom in this country to employ Persian caravans. From this it will be obvious to you that the instances of robbery enumerated in the inclosed list, referring only to goods which are actually British owned, represent only a small proportion of the robberies actually committed.

Lord Lansdowne, in his telegram above referred to, instructs me to demand compensation from the local authorities for goods stolen from British-owned caravans, but I would point out that it has always been the custom in this country to base such demands on the ownership of the goods and not of that of the caravan which carries them. Compensation has been demanded in all cases of actual road robbery enumerated in the inclosed list, and has in some cases been paid. At the same time you will readily understand that the mere fact of compensation being paid in isolated cases by no means makes up for the dislocation of trade caused by the general insecurity of the roads in the southern provinces. In gauging the situation it should not be forgotten that the robberies here enumerated are only those of British-owned goods, and are but a small fraction of the grand total, and that the loss of a few bales of cloth or loads of sugar by no means represents the extent of injury done to British trade. It is the general insecurity of traffic, of which the specific cases of robbery here quoted are only minor evidences, that adversely affects our interests by raising the charges for transport to extortionate proportions, and making local merchants fight shy of giving orders, owing to the certainty of long delay in receiving their goods, if, indeed, they are ever delivered. I have during the last two years myself lost one whole consignment of wine, and the boxes containing a large proportion of my plate arrived filled with stones.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

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No. 101.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)*

(No. 1.)

Sir,

*Tehran, January 1, 1906.*

WITH reference to my despatch to the Marquess of Lansdowne No. 253 of the 4th ultimo, I have the honour to inclose correspondence regarding the Urmi case.

Owing to the receipt on the 10th instant of two unsatisfactory telegrams from Mr. Wratislaw (see inclosures), I suggested to the United States' Minister, and he agreed, that the time had come to address a joint note to the Persian Government demanding that immediate and adequate steps be taken to arrest the Kurds suspected of complicity in the murder of Mr. Labaree and the attack on Captain Gough. We accordingly addressed a communication to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, who has as yet sent no reply.

It would appear from Mr. Wratislaw's subsequent telegrams that there is some prospect of an expedition being dispatched against the Dasht Kurds, but up to the present, I gather, no definite measures have been taken, and the case remains in its usual unsatisfactory condition.

You will see from the notes addressed by Mr. Pearson and myself to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh on the 14th instant that the Persian Government have been attempting to delay the inquiry at Urmi on the plea that any operations against the Kurds will complicate the negotiations at present in progress to induce the Ottoman Government to withdraw their troops from Vazneh and Lahijan. Both the United States' Minister and myself regard this plea as a mere trick on the part of the Persian Government still further to procrastinate and delay settling cases which have already been outstanding far too long.

Mr. Pearson and I have to-day arranged that, unless steps to arrest the suspected Kurds are taken by the end of this week, we shall call on the Grand Vizier together

and inform His Highness that in case of further delay we shall ask for an audience and lay the matter before the Shah.

I trust, if it becomes necessary, this action will meet with your approval.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 101.

*Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 48. Confidential.)

Sir,

*Urmi, November 25, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to report that Mirza Bagher Khan, acting on instructions at length received from Tehran, has caused notices to be posted up in Urmi calling on persons who can give evidence in the Labaree case to come forward freely, and assuring them of the protection of the Persian Government in case they do so. Mirza Bagher Khan, however, himself acknowledges that the Persian Government is unable to give efficient protection to witnesses who reside in the Kurdish villages, and I do not anticipate that his announcement will have any effect.

As I have already reported by telegraph, the Valiahd recently sent his Aide-de-camp, Riza Khan, grandson of the Vali of Urmi, to try to induce the accused Kurds to surrender and stand their trial. He was for two days in Dasht, but I understand that he failed in his object. It is understood that the Valiahd will send another emissary on the same mission, who may possibly be more successful. Riza Khan is not a person likely to have much weight with the Kurds or any one else, being a comely youth who, five years ago, was carried off from Urmi by the Valiahd to live in guilty splendour at Tabreez.

The Valiahd to all appearances is really desirous of bringing the Kurds to Urmi. His object is, however, probably to have them whitewashed, not condemned, though, with the fate of Jafer Agha fresh in their memories, they hesitate to put any faith in his promises and assurances. The situation is complicated by the jealousy of Mir Haji Beg, hitherto recognized as the leading Chief amongst the Begzadé, for Gurghin Beg, whom the Persian Government are inclined to patronize. The latter has undertaken to bring the accused Kurds in, and Mir Haji Beg is doing his best to prevent it, with the idea of getting Gurghin into trouble. If, however, the Persian Government, or rather the Valiahd, insist, I imagine that they will eventually be forced to surrender, as in the winter time their escape is quite cut off, and Sheikh Sadik has again refused to grant them asylum in his district. But they are likely to postpone the evil day as long as possible, and I fear that my stay in Urmi will be very protracted.

Both Mir Haji Beg and Gurghin Beg have recently written to the missionaries here protesting the innocence of the Begzadé, and I have myself received a letter to the same effect, signed by seven other leading men. They are evidently very much perturbed, and might, I think, have been induced to come to a compromise, in the manner I have previously reported, had the United States' Minister been willing to sanction such a solution of the difficulty. As my only object in meeting Gurghin was to effect an arrangement, I thought better to decline to see him, as there was always a risk, though I personally considered it infinitesimal, that the precautions I could take against treachery might prove ineffectual. I have, however, left the door open for further negotiations should he desire them.

Mirza Bagher Khan has informed me that Fathullah Beg is dead. I have heard the same report from other sources, but I have told Bagher that I shall require very convincing proof of so timely a decease.

With regard to the attack on Captain Gough, it is supposed to have been the work of Tamar Beg's men, who were certainly in the vicinity at the time. Tamar Beg is on bad terms with Gurghin, and not particularly popular with the other Begzadé, and I have therefore more hope of obtaining satisfaction in this matter than in the Labaree murder. Bagher Khan's view is that we should look into this after finishing the murder inquiry, and I propose to adopt it unless circumstances render a different course desirable.

Bagher Khan's attitude is now more reasonable, and I conclude that he has had a

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ihnt from Tehran to be more cautious in his utterances. He seems rather anxious about his own position, and talks feelingly of his desire not to soil his white beard at the end of his career.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) A. C. WRATISLAW.

Inclosure 2 in No. 101.

*Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(Telegraphic.)

*Urmi, December 5, 1905.*

THE second emissary sent by the Valiahd returned to-day, having met with a positive refusal from the Kurds to surrender. They have sent in an application to the Russian Vice-Consul asking for his protection and intervention. I understand that the Vice-Consul has replied that he will let them have his answer in three days.

In view of these fresh complications I should be glad if you would furnish me with instructions.

Inclosure 3 in No. 101.

*Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(Telegraphic.)

*Urmi, December 7, 1905.*

THE Valiahd sent a telegram to the Kurds last night to the effect that he had so far had consideration for them, but that if they did not at once surrender he would take strong measures, which would not be at all to their liking.

Bagher Khan informs me that he has sent telegrams to both the Mushir-ed-Dowleh and the Valiahd stating that there is no likelihood of the Kurds making a peaceable surrender.

The Kurds, in order, I presume, to show their solidarity, have come in force to Bender, which lies only 6 miles from Urmi.

Inclosure 4 in No. 101.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mr. Pearson.*

Sir,

*Tehran, December 10, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copies of two telegrams just received from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urmi regarding the present attitude of the Kurds.

I desire to call your special attention to the application of the Kurds to the Russian Vice-Consul at Urmi for his intervention, and to their threatening demonstration near Urmi.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) E. GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 5 in No. 101.

*Mr. Pearson and Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

Your Excellency,

*Tehran, December 11, 1905.*

WE, the Undersigned, have the honour to inform you that Mr. Wratislaw, His Britannic Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez, who is also representing the interests of the United States' Government in Azerbaijan, has telegraphed to say that the Kurds suspected of complicity in the murder of Mr. Labaree and in the attack on Captain Gough positively refuse to obey the orders of His Imperial Highness the Valiahd to come to stand their trial at Urmi. Mr. Wratislaw further states that the Kurds have collected in force at Bender, near Urmi.

We desire to call your Excellency's attention to the fact that it is nearly two years since Mr. Labaree was murdered, and over a year since the attack on

Captain Gough, and no punishment has yet been meted out to the persons concerned in these outrages. It must be clear to your Excellency that this state of things cannot be permitted to continue.

We therefore demand that immediate and adequate steps be taken by the Persian Government to arrest the Kurds suspected of complicity in the above crimes, and to strengthen the garrison at Urmi in case of an attack on that town. We shall, of course, hold the Persian Government responsible for the safety of Mr. Wratislaw, the American missionaries resident at Urmi, and any other subjects or citizens of our respective Governments who may be endangered by the state of anarchy which the Persian Government permit to continue in that neighbourhood.

(Signed) R. PEARSON.  
E. GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 6 in No. 101.

*Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 82.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Urmi, December 11, 1905.*

I AM confidentially informed by the Governor of Urmi that a regiment and 400 irregular cavalry have been ordered by the Valiahd to hold themselves in readiness for an attack on the Kurds. The Governor meanwhile threatens that he will destroy them if they refuse to surrender.

Once the Kurds see that resistance is useless they will probably give way, and, as heavy snow has fallen, it seems unlikely that they will resist an expedition. It is possible, however, that the accused men may endeavour to escape across the Turkish frontier, and I was asked to-day by the Persian Commissioner what steps we should take if they succeeded in doing so. I answered that in that eventuality the matter would have to be referred to Tehran.

Inclosure 7 in No. 101.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

*Tehran, December 14, 1905.*

YOU yesterday informed me, in the course of the conversation I had the honour to have with your Excellency, that, in consequence of the dispute between the Persian and Ottoman Governments regarding the ownership of Vazneh, you desired the United States' Minister and myself to grant a delay of some forty days before the Kurds accused of complicity in the Labaree murder and the attack on Captain Gough are brought to trial.

I lost no time in bringing your Excellency's desire to the notice of Mr. Pearson, who agrees with me in seeing no connection between the dispute in question and the trial of the Kurds now impending at Urmi. It is hardly necessary for me to repeat that I have constantly told your Excellency that in my opinion the punishment of the persons implicated in these crimes has already been far too long delayed, and I must strongly protest against the Vazneh dispute being made the pretext for further procrastination. Your Excellency must be aware that the continued presence of His Majesty's Consul at Urmi is a matter of inconvenience both to His Majesty's Government and to himself. In these circumstances, unless the Persian Government take serious steps to hold the promised inquiry, I must telegraph to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for instructions.

Inclosure 8 in No. 101.

*Mr. Pearson to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

Sir,

*Tehran, December 14, 1905.*

MR. GRANT DUFF, His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, informs me that, on account of the pendency of a boundary question between the Governments of Persia and Turkey, your Excellency insists that there should be further delay in the trial and punishment of the Kurds for murder.

I feel obliged earnestly to protest against such a course, and against such a view of the case. I fail utterly to see any connection between the punishment for murder of certain Persian subjects and the settlement of a boundary question which has been in dispute for half a century, and which may remain unsolved for an indefinite period in the future.

There is no dispute about the nationality or the locality of the Kurds, and I join heartily with His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires in protesting against the interjection of irrelevant matters.

I avail, &c.  
(Signed) R. PEARSON.

Inclosure 9 in No. 101.

*Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 83.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Urmi, December 14, 1905.

It seems that matters are being left for a few days in suspense so that the Salar may be still further squeezed. Dasht belongs to him, and he has been informed that unless he produces the accused Kurds his property will be confiscated.

I have just received your telegram of the 12th December. The Kurds have now all gone to their homes, and there is no danger. I have received a message from Mir Haji Beg, to which I do not propose to send any reply, saying that the Kurds will not surrender unless I give them a guarantee.

To-day an attempt was made by friends of the Urmi Mullah to start a riot in the bazaar, and all the shops were shut; but the Governor, who is quite a reliable official, went to the bazaar at once and prevented any further disturbance, insisting on the reopening of the shops.

Inclosure 10 in No. 101.

*Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 84.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Urmi, December 18, 1905.

I AM now informed by Bagher Khan that his instructions do not extend to a general inquiry into the Labaree murder, but only authorize him to decide as to the guilt or innocence of certain Kurds, who are specified. If the inquiry should result in their acquittal, he has no instructions to take any further steps. In our conversations he frequently refers to an Agreement arrived at between the Mushir-ed-Dowleh and the American Minister and to a list of the accused. It is possible that the latter was based on the information which I supplied, but neither of these documents has been communicated to me. I would suggest that copies of all documents relating to the case should be forwarded to me by the American Legation.

The whole case seems to be at a standstill for the present, save for the fact that the Governor assures me that he is still endeavouring to entice the Kurds by false promises and threats.

Inclosure 11 in No. 101.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mr. Pearson.*

Sir,

Tehran, December 19, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith paraphrases of two telegrams from Mr. Wratislaw, from which it would appear that no progress has been made with the inquiry at Urmi.

I propose to call on you at 6 P.M. to-day to discuss the matter, or, if it is more convenient, would you kindly come to the Chancery of this Legation to-morrow morning at about 11 A.M.?

I have, &c.  
(Signed) E. GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 12 in No. 101.

*Mr. Pearson to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

Dear Mr. Grant Duff,

American Legation, Tehran, December 21, 1905.

IN compliance with your request, I beg to inclose copies of terms of Agreement between the American and Persian Governments in relation to the Labaree murder.

Very sincerely yours,  
(Signed) R. PEARSON.

Inclosure 13 in No. 101.

*Agreement.*

In the matter of the murder of Benjamin W. Labaree, an American citizen :

THE Persian Government having agreed to the demands of the American Government requiring :—

1. The imprisonment for life of Mir Ghaffar, the principal murderer ;
2. The arrest and punishment, according to the measure of their guilt, of his accomplices in the murder ;
3. The payment in cash, for the benefit of the widow and orphans of the deceased, of an indemnity in the sum of 50,000 dollars gold ;

And the President of the United States, desiring to set a salutary example to prevent similar crimes, rather than to exact harsh and inconvenient terms of the Persian Government, and considering the unbroken friendship that has existed between the two Governments in the past, has instructed Richmond Pearson, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States, to accept the sum of 30,000 dollars instead of the sum of 50,000 dollars, the full amount of the indemnity conceded by the Persian Government, on the following express conditions :—

1. If Mir Ghaffar shall be permitted to escape from prison by the negligence or connivance of Persian officials ;
2. Or if the leading accomplices, notoriously identified as participants in the crime, and being within the jurisdiction of Persia, shall not have been captured and punished, according to the measure of their guilt, before the 9th March, 1906 ;
3. Or if the amount of the indemnity or any part thereof shall be levied by any special tax, or by other device or pretext exacted from the Christian population residing in Urmi or elsewhere in Persia, then, and in any such event, so much of the indemnity as is hereby remitted—to wit, the sum of 20,000 dollars—shall immediately become due and payable, just as if no reduction had been made in the total amount conceded by the Persian Government, it being the purpose and intent of both Governments, in concluding this form of settlement, to prevent as far as possible the recurrence of similar crimes.

On behalf of the United States of America,  
(Signed) R. PEARSON.

Tehran, November 20, 1904.

Inclosure 14 in No. 101.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. Pearson.*

Your Excellency,

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, January 3, 1906.

I HAVE considered the draft Memorandum, containing the conditions for bringing to a conclusion the case of the murder of Mr. Labaree, which you presented to me several days ago.

In order to settle the question of the indemnity of 30,000 dollars which the Government of the United States has demanded for the support of the widow and orphans of Mr. Labaree, I have now to place in your hands a draft on the Imperial Bank for this amount.

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With regard to the imprisonment of Mir Ghaffar and the punishment of the persons implicated with him in the crime, the Persian Government will, after the necessary inquiries in accordance with the draft Memorandum, keep Mir Ghaffar in perpetual confinement.

With respect to the other persons implicated in this murder, whoever of them shall be found within the Government and jurisdiction of Persia shall by the 9th March, 1906, be arrested and brought to trial, and punished according to the measure of their guilt.

With reference to the demand which you had written, that the sum of the indemnity to be paid to the heirs of the late Mr. Labaree, the Persian Government should not, either as a tax, or on any other pretext, collect it from the Christians resident in Urmi, I beg to acquaint your Excellency that the Persian Government never had and has not thought of taking this sum by force from persons innocent of the crime. But it is evident that should it be proved that Christians were implicated in this murder they will not be exempt from punishment which the necessities of justice may demand.

I take, &c.  
(Sealed) Mushir-ed-Dowleh (Minister for Foreign Affairs).

Inclosure 15 in No. 101.

*Names of Accomplices in the Labaree Murder Case.*

SAIDI, son of Gehangir Beg, of Anbi.  
Timur Beg, of Khosruki.  
Changis Beg, son of Hassan Beg, of Derbend, near to Anbi.  
Mir Mohammad, of Bedre, son of Bahadur Khan Beg.  
Ahmad.  
Sohrab.  
Fathi, son of Changis Beg, of Derbend. }  
Esa, son of Iskander, of the Shakoiks. } Servants of Fathi.  
Mohammad. }  
Said Khan Beg, of Derbend, and one of his servants.  
Tathullah Beg, of Talini, and a servant.  
Two servants of Gurgin Beg, of Aubi.

*Dr. Cochrane's List.*

The following are the men brought to Tehran :—

Gurgin Khan.	Mirza Kader Khan.
Kuli Beg.	Seerab Beg.
Ali Khan Ugli.	

Inclosure 16 in No. 101.

*Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 86. Confidential.)  
(Telegraphic.) P.

*Urmi, December 24, 1905.*

ACCORDING to the Governor, the Valiahd has telegraphed that Fathi Sultan will leave Tabreez for Urmi either to-day or to-morrow with a force of cavalry, and that, unless the accused Kurds surrender meanwhile, they will be attacked. The Governor further informed me that he has himself been instructed to collect a body of loyal Kurds to co-operate with Fathi Sultan. He hopes that it will not be necessary to use force, the Kurds having already got wind of the preparations against them and showing a disposition to negotiate, though the conditions so far offered by them are not such as he can accept.

I have not been able to obtain official confirmation of the report mentioned in my last telegram that the accused Kurds had fled to Turkish territory, but Christians from his district maintain that Saidi has got away.

Inclosure 17 in No. 101.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mr. Pearson.*

Sir,

*Tehran, December 26, 1905.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Excellency herewith a despatch which I have received from Mr. Consul-General Wratislaw, at Urmi, reporting on the present state of the Labaree murder inquiry, and also a paraphrase of a telegram which I received yesterday from Urmi on the same subject.

With regard to the rumour that the accused Kurds had fled across the Turkish frontier, I have the honour to inform you that I telegraphed to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople on the 13th December, requesting him to urge the Turkish Government to warn their frontier officials that the Kurds might attempt to cross the frontier, and to instruct them to prevent their doing so. I have since been informed from Constantinople that this has been done.

I have the honour to request you to return Mr. Wratislaw's despatch to me when done with.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) E. GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 18 in No. 101.

*Mr. Pearson to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

*American Legation, Tehran, December 29, 1905.*

IN September last your Excellency notified me that the Kurds accused of the murder of Mr. Labaree, and therefore kept in custody at Tehran, had been ordered to Urmi for trial, and you asked me who would represent my Government at said trial.

I replied that the British Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Grant Duff, had courteously tendered the services of His Britannic Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez, and had instructed him to proceed to Urmi to represent the American Government at the said trial.

He has been waiting there for this purpose for fully two months.

In the meantime your Commissioner, Bagher Khan, instead of taking the Kurds as prisoners to Urmi, set them free on the way. They have not only refused to return and stand trial, but have openly defied your authority, and threatened the peace of the region around Urmi.

Under these circumstances I am constrained to ask your Excellency :—

1. Whether Bagher Khan liberated the accused Kurds by the authority or with the knowledge of the Persian Government?
2. What effective steps have been taken to recapture these men?
3. When definitely and positively will your Government engage to produce the bodies of these men at the place of trial?

It is certain and obvious that my Government would be unwilling to tax indefinitely the generosity of the British Government in asking their Consul-General to remain away from his post in order to attend a trial which may never take place. For this reason I have to request a reply from your Excellency without any avoidable delay, so that I may notify the British Legation accordingly.

Inclosure 19 in No. 101.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Consul-General Wratislaw.*

Sir,

*Tehran, December 30, 1905.*

I TRANSMIT to you herewith, in compliance with the request contained in your telegram No. 84 of the 18th December, a copy of the Agreement between the American and Persian Governments in relation to the Labaree murder and the list of accomplices in the crime, as supplied to me by the American Minister.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 20 in No. 101.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mr. Pearson.*

Sir, *Tehran, December 31, 1905.*  
THE American Presbyterian Mission at Urmi have forwarded the inclosed message to you through Mr. Wratislaw. His Majesty's Consul-General states that he had nothing to do with the composition of the said message, the purport of which neither he nor I clearly understand.

I request you to inform me what reply, if any, you would wish returned to the American missionaries.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) E. GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 21 in No. 101.

*Message from American Mission at Urmi for Mr. Pearson, transmitted by Consul-General Wratislaw, December 30, 1905.*

WHILE recognizing the necessity for the expedition against the Kurds, and the probability that they will offer submission on satisfactory terms, the American Mission begs to point out that, there being no one here authorized to receive such offer except the Persians, results will follow involving great danger to innocent persons and American interests.

Inclosure 22 in No. 101.

*Mr. Pearson to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

*American Legation, Tehran, December 31, 1905.*

I THANK you for the telegram from the American missionaries at Urmi, dated the 30th December, 1905. Will you wire Mr. Wratislaw that this message is apparently self-contradictory or wholly unintelligible, and ask the American missionaries to express their meaning in plain and consistent words, and that Mr. Wratislaw is capably and satisfactorily representing American interests.

[4138] No. 102.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)*

(No. 2. Confidential.)

Sir, *Tehran, January 3, 1906.*  
WITH reference to my despatch No. 258 of the 5th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit correspondence regarding the attack on Colonel J. A. Douglas and Captain Lorimer.

I recently received a telegram from His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah stating that a mare belonging to Captain Lorimer and some mules which formed part of the caravan at the time of the outrage had been recovered. I instructed Captain Gough that these animals should be sold, and that on being informed of their sale, I would deduct the proceeds from the compensation claimed from the Persian Government. I so informed Mushir-ed-Dowleh, who replied in the inclosed note, inquiring on what grounds compensation was claimed by His Majesty's Government. I answered by referring his Excellency to the note addressed by Sir A. Hardinge to the Persian Government on the 11th January, 1905, in which the amount of compensation claimed and the views of His Majesty's Government are very clearly stated. As the Persian Government show no disposition to settle our claim, I have the honour to ask that I may be furnished with your instructions. It would, I venture to think, be impolitic not to press this case home. Luristan has been, and still is, in a condition bordering on open rebellion. This condition is entirely due to the utter folly and incapacity of a succession of Persian Governors. The Salar-ed-Dowleh has recently

been appointed to succeed the Firman Firma in the Governorship of Luristan, and although His Imperial Highness is to the full as stupid, cruel, and incapable as most of the other members of the Kajar tribe, he is, I think, anxious to be on good terms with His Majesty's Legation. I know him well, and shall speak to him seriously about the state of the province before he leaves Tehran. If pressed, he will perhaps at first act with some vigour, and if you see fit to furnish me with a strong message to the Persian Government, it is possible that I may be able to effect the arrest and punishment of the remainder of the Mirs implicated in the attack on our officers.

I hear from a certain source that persons about the Shah's Court have been stating that Colonel Douglas and Captain Lorimer were attacked and wounded by their own servants, because they refused to pay their wages. As the author of this statement is the Shah's principal physician, Dr. Schneider, I think it all the more necessary to make it clear to the Persian Government that His Majesty's Government have no idea of dropping the case and of foregoing the payment of compensation.

It is, Colonel Douglas thinks, probable that an expedition against the Direkwends during the winter, when they are in the low hills north of Dizful, would be attended with success, and would speedily bring the tribe to terms.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 102.

*Firman Firma to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

*November 30, 1905.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's telegram, and as I have already telegraphed that I would write by post, I have the honour to make the following statements:—

The British Legation stated that they have not recognized in the photograph the Lurs engaged in the attack on the British officers except Mir Khani Khan. The man in question is Mir Ghani Khan, and a mistake has been made in the name. The man is imprisoned with the others at Kermanshah. Besides this man, Mir Seyed Mohamed Khan and Mir Nezer Ali Khan, who, for certain, were present on the occasion, are under arrest. The latter is not in the photograph. His father, Mir Hajji Khan, was arrested, who handed over the son, and, as you are informed, he then went away. Mir Taimur, brother of Mir Sarbeng, is amongst the prisoners. The latter was present on the occasion of the attack, but his brother has been arrested. Mir Tafhad, called by the Legation Mir Afra, died in the prison here, and his body was shown to Dr. Williams, of the British Consulate, and a few other doctors. In any case, five of the culprits have been with the prisoners, and the remaining seven men are most important for the punishment of the rest of the offenders. I think I have done good service, but I have resigned the Government of the province in question. No doubt the Persian Government will take suitable measures in the matter through the new Governor, and will send a reply to the representations of the British Legation. I have already explained to the Grand Vizier and repeat to you my reasons for resigning the Governorships of Burujird and Luristan. It is on account of my health and my family which prevent me from travelling. I hope my resignation will be accepted.

Inclosure 2 in No. 102.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

*December 26, 1905.*

I HAD the honour to receive the copy of the Firman Firma's letter to your Excellency of the 30th ultimo on the subject of the Lurs concerned in the attack on Colonel Douglas and Captain Lorimer.

Although His Highness' communication is somewhat vague, and I only imperfectly understand its purport, I gather that there are altogether twelve persons in prison at Kermanshah, viz., five Lurs, who were actually concerned in the outrage, and seven others who are indirectly implicated.

I request that the five Lurs mentioned may be detained in prison, while the remaining seven, I would suggest, be used to obtain the surrender of the remainder of

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the Lurs accused of complicity in the attack. The names of the guilty persons were long ago forwarded by His Majesty's Legation for the use of the Persian Government. I would remind your Excellency that His Highness the Firman Firma promised to take military measures against the Lurs after the harvest, and has up to the present failed to carry out his undertaking. As he has apparently resigned the Governorship of Luristan, I request your Excellency to inform me who will be deputed by the Persian Government to fulfil the promise made by His Highness.

I would also call your Excellency's attention to the fact that over a year has already elapsed since the outrage on our officers, and no satisfaction has yet been offered by the Persian Government. In these circumstances I should be obliged for an early reply stating what measures it is proposed to take to bring the remaining assailants of Colonel Douglas and Captain Lorimer to justice.

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Inclosure 3 in No. 102.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

*December 31, 1905.*

I HAVE received your note of the 19th instant respecting one mare belonging to Mr. Lorimer and five mules belonging to the muleteer. At the end of your note you state that "the amount will be deducted from the compensation claimed from the Persian Government." I consider it necessary to inquire on what ground the compensation has been claimed. If it is on account of the attack by Lurs on Mr. Lorimer, I beg to inform you that a letter was given him in which he was informed of the state of the road, and that the responsibility of injuries done to him would rest with himself, and that the Persian Government would not be responsible for any compensation. If the claim is about any other matter I know nothing about it, and it requires explanation.

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Inclosure 4 in No. 102.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

*Tehran, January 1, 1906.*

I HAD the honour to receive your Excellency's note of the 31st ultimo regarding the compensation demanded by His Majesty's Government on account of the attack on Colonel Douglas and Captain Lorimer by Direkwend Lurs in the autumn of 1904.

In reply, I have the honour to refer you to Sir A. Hardinge's note to the Persian Government of the 11th January, 1905, which clearly states the views of His Majesty's Government in regard to the outrage committed on these officers and the amount of compensation claimed from the Government of His Majesty the Shah.

As I gather from your Excellency's note that you decline to pay the compensation demanded, I am forwarding a translation of it to Sir E. Grey by the messenger leaving here on Friday.

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No. 103.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)*

(No. 3.)

Sir,

*Tehran, January 3, 1906.*

WITH reference to your telegram No. 97 of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to forward correspondence with the Persian Government regarding the alleged encroachments by the Ottoman troops at Vazneh and in Lahijan.

The correspondence which has passed between the Turkish Embassy here and the Persian Grand Vizier is very lengthy and confused, so I thought it best to send you a précis of it instead of a complete translation.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh inquired verbally why His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople had recommended that the Persian Government should agree to a Mixed Commission to settle the frontier question without insisting on the withdrawal of the Ottoman troops as a prior condition.

I replied that I had no information as to the reasons which had actuated his Excellency in making this report to His Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

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Inclosure 1 in No. 103.

*Extracts from Correspondence passed between the Persian Government and the Ottoman Embassy at Tehran.—(Communicated by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh to His Majesty's Legation in his Note of December 23, 1905.)*

NOTE from the Ambassador to the Persian Foreign Office, dated the 14th November, quoting a telegram from the Porte to the effect that the Vazneh and Lahijan question is of no importance and will soon be settled.

2. Note from the Persian Foreign Office to the Ambassador, dated the 6th December, 1905, complaining of the delay of the Turkish Government in recalling their troops from Vazneh in spite of the above note.

3. Note, dated the 8th December, 1905, and one without date, addressed by the Turkish Ambassador to the Persian Grand Vizier, complaining of the Persian military demonstration on the frontier, and stating that the Persian Government will be responsible for the consequences.

4. Note from the Persian Grand Vizier to the Ambassador, dated the 11th December, 1905, expressing surprise that the Ottoman Government should call the measures taken by the Persian Government to protect their frontier acts of aggression. According to Article III of the Erzeroum Treaty, the frontier disputes between the two Governments have not been settled, except those connected with Mohammerah Zohal, and that before the conclusion of the Treaty in question Lahijan and Vazneh, which are situated east of Kalesheen, had been in possession of Persia and Persian tribes. Old buildings also prove this fact. The correspondence addressed by the Turkish authorities to the Persian tribes, asking them to hand over the district to the Turks and to become Turkish subjects, is further proof of the district being in possession of the Persian Government. The presence of the Turkish troops on the frontier has encouraged Sheikh Sadek, whose designs are well known to every one, to take advantage of the occasion to attack the villages in the Urmi district. Some Turkish troops have arrived in the villages of Seer and Sardik. It is only natural for the inhabitants of the district to repulse the encroachers, but in order to protect the honour of Islam the Persian Government has hitherto prevented them from doing so. In order to prevent the Kurds and Persian tribes in Lahijan from crossing the frontier, the Persian Government has sent some troops with orders to take every precaution until the Ambassador's promise with regard to the withdrawal of the Turkish troops from the frontier is fulfilled.

5. Note from the Persian Grand Vizier to the Ambassador, dated the 11th December, 1905, stating that the Persian Government will have no objection to the Joint Commission for the settlement of the frontier dispute, provided that the Turkish troops are recalled from the frontier beforehand.

6. Note from the Ambassador to the Persian Grand Vizier, dated the 16th December, 1905, stating that, although there is no doubt as to the ownership of Vazneh and Lahijan in the mind of the Turkish Government, the Porte has nominated certain officials to investigate the matter, and asks the Persian Government to nominate its Delegates for this purpose, and further says that the Ottoman Government will not recall their troops because the Persians are concentrating troops on the frontier.

7. Note from the Grand Vizier to the Turkish Ambassador, dated the 19th December, 1905, stating that he does not know to which of the arguments put forward in his note the Ottoman Government objects, and says that the best proof as to the ownership of the lands by the Persian Government is the correspondence addressed by Ezzat Beg and other Turkish officials to the inhabitants of the district in question inviting them to become Turkish subjects. Another proof is that the Persians have been in possession of the district for a great many years, and that they have houses and buildings there.

Inclosure 2 in No. 103.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(Translation.)

December 26, 1905.

I SENT you yesterday in an official note copies of the correspondence passed between the Persian Grand Vizier and the Turkish Embassy respecting the encroachment by the Turkish troops on Vazneh and Lahijan.

In view of the importance of the matter, I have now the honour to request you to telegraph at once to the British Ambassador at Constantinople to assist the Persian Representative, in accordance with the friendship existing between our respective Governments, in causing the withdrawal of the Turkish encroachers from Persian territory. After the evacuation of the territory in question, the Persian Government will have no objection to a mixed inquiry, as it has already promised.

Inclosure 3 in No. 103.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

Tehran, December 28, 1905.

AS I had the honour to inform you verbally on the 27th instant, I telegraphed to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that the Persian Government agreed to the settlement of the Vazneh question by a Mixed Commission, provided that the Ottoman Government first withdraw their troops from the disputed territory.

I have to-day received a communication from Sir Edward Grey to the effect that His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople is strongly of the opinion that the Persian Government would do well to accept the proposed arrangement, without stipulating for the withdrawal of the Turkish troops.

Sir E. Grey concurs in Sir N. O'Connor's view, and I am instructed to advise your Excellency accordingly.

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No. 104.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)*

(No. 4.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 4, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the usual summary of events which have occurred in Persia during the past month.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 144.

*Monthly Summary.*

*Meshed.*

THE telegraphic extension from Kuchan to Bajgiran was completed on the 17th November. Another line from Daragez to Artik is to be constructed in the spring.

2. Major Sykes, who had been on tour since the 24th October, returned to Meshed on the 21st November.

3. M. Mousnikow, the Russian Consul-General, has returned to Meshed only to pack up his effects and is leaving again very shortly. His successor has not yet been appointed, and M. Reschetow expects to remain in charge till the spring. There is also at the Consulate-General a Captain, Leon Scouratt, who styles himself "Attaché au Consulat-Général Impérial de la Russie à Meshed." M. Oyseenkow, Consul at Bunder Abbas, left Meshed for his post on the 2nd December, taking with him an

escort of twelve Cossacks. The number of Russian Cossacks remaining in Meshed is now about twenty-eight.

4. His Majesty's Consul-General mentions a report made to him that the Russian Bank Manager, in conversation with a member of the Consulate, was overheard to say that the concession for the "Khorassan Railway" had been given to one Agha Hussein, son of Muhammad Hassan Coy, the bank to hold a half-share, and both parties being free to sell the whole or a portion of their interest in the concession. On the same occasion M. Dmitriev mentioned that, after some difficulty, the Reis-ut-Tujjar, two days before his departure from Meshed, had signed the Agreement for the transfer to the Russians of the Persian portion of the Meshed-Askhabad Road (see paragraph 1 of last month's summary). Mr. Grant Duff addressed the Prime Minister officially on this subject, and was informed, in reply, that the report was unfounded, as the concessionaire has not the right to transfer the road.

5. Three sowars of the Consular escort were insulted by a door-keeper in the shrine last month. On the representation of the Attaché to the Consulate the Guardian of the Shrine imprisoned the offender for six days.

*Central Asia.*

According to information received at Meshed at the beginning of December, the railway, post, and telegraph offices at Askhabad were all closed, and practically no trains were running. The Turkomans, too, were apparently getting out of hand, and several cases of robbery and murder of travellers near Askhabad were reported. Later news was to the effect that there was constant fighting between the Cossacks and the soldiers, especially at Tashkend, where some hundred casualties were said to have occurred; and a further report stated that the Askhabad garrison had seized the magazines and deprived their officers of authority.

*Seistan.*

1. The new Russian Consul for Seistan, M. Nekrassow, arrived there on the 10th November. He was met by a party of fifty sowars, and a guard of honour, with band, were drawn up at the Consulate to meet him. Our Consul raised some objections to the size of the escort sent, as hitherto only twenty-five sowars have been recognized as the number to which a Consul was entitled, and the guard of honour and band are not usually sent; but the Deputy Governor replied that he had been obliged to comply with the instructions of the Karguzar, who had given him written orders on the subject. M. Nekrassow brought with him fifteen Cossacks, raising the total strength of the Russian escort to thirty-three Cossacks. Including women and children, the Russian official community in Seistan now numbers fifty-three, as against seven British.

2. Trade returns furnished by the Director of Customs for the half-year ending the 20th August show an increase of 15,780 rupees on the figures for the corresponding period of the former year. The increase is almost entirely under the head of exports to India, there being a considerable falling off of imports.

3. The Yamin-i-Nizam is reported to have written to the Afghan frontier officer to the effect that, as Persia has rejected the McMahon Water Award, she considers the latter to be inoperative, and that henceforth the original Goldsmid Award should be binding on both parties.

4. Captain Macpherson, who was on tour along the frontier at the end of November, says that disputes between the Persians and the Afghans over the water question are of constant occurrence, and that feeling was at that time very bitter.

*Kerman.*

The Governor-General of Kerman left for Tehran at the end of November. He had telegraphed to the Prime Minister that he wished personally to see the Shah and explain to him the state of affairs in Kerman, and that if he were required to pay up arrears of revenue due from the late Governor-General he would ask to be allowed to resign his post. His request was sanctioned and he is now on his way.

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*Shiraz.*

1. It is reported from Shiraz, on the authority of the Russian "Tajir-bashi," that a Russian Consul will be shortly appointed and a branch of the Russian bank opened there.

2. The Province of Fars continues to be in a very disturbed condition. At the beginning of December the leading Mollahs and other influential men of Shiraz sent a long telegram to the Prime Minister detailing their grievances, which were chiefly the increased taxation and extortion under the régime of the Shoa-es-Sultaneh and the general insecurity of life and property. As no answer was received, this was followed, on the 26th December, by the telegram to all foreign Legations in Tehran, which forms the subject of Mr. Grant Duff's despatch No. 280. Meanwhile, the clergy, merchants, and people retired to the Shah Chiragh Mosque, and all shops were closed. On the 26th December His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz telegraphed that the people were getting very impatient, and that efforts were being made to excite all Fars, and a further telegram on the 28th reported the situation worse, that there was continual uproar and firing in the air, and that people was said to be coming in from outside.

There has also been disturbances at Kazerun.

*Bushire.*

1. Major Cox reports that M. Waffelaert, who was Director of Customs at Bushire till last May, and who gave a good deal of trouble there in connection with quarantine and postal arrangements, has now been given a Russian decoration, and is being brought back to his former post at Mohammerah.

2. On the 21st December the Government of India telegraphed to ask whether it would not be possible for the Telegraph Department, pending the formal opening of the Henjam-Bunder Abbas Line, to pass service messages along it informally. The Director of Telegraphs has replied that there will be no technical difficulties in carrying out this arrangement.

*Ahwaz.*

1. His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Ahwaz was touring in the Bakhtiari country in October and November. He is submitting a detailed Report on the Ahwaz-Ispahan road. During his tour he spoke to the Bakhtiari Khans on the subject of the friction between them and the Sheikh of Mohammerah in respect of refugees to Algowa, and the Chiefs have promised that when they move down to Ram Hormuz they will discuss the matter and call the assistance of the Vice-Consul at Ahwaz as Arbitrator.

He also explained to them the proposals made by Major Cox for supplying them with a medical attendant of their own which they have long wanted. This they also promised to discuss among themselves and to give a reply shortly.

2. An expedition against the Beni Truf, a tribe of Arabs living near Hawizeh, who have for some time past refused to pay their revenues, was lately brought to a successful conclusion.

The force numbered about 2,000 men, composed partly of Persian troops and partly of tribesmen, the whole being under the command of the Salar Muazzim, Governor of Shuster. They met with no resistance, and most of the outstanding revenue was collected.

*Resht.*

1. Rumours are current in the town that His Imperial Highness Azad-es-Sultaneh, the present Governor, will shortly be recalled to Tehran.

2. The Manager of the Russian Banque d'Escompte at Resht is, it is stated, leaving there shortly for Mazanderan with the object of establishing branches of the Bank at Barfurush and Astrabad.

3. An affray occurred early in December between the Persian Cossacks attached to the Russian Bank and some servants of His Imperial Highness the Prince-Governor, in which the latter were maltreated.

4. The attitude of the Russian Bank at Resht towards its customers has lately

caused much discontent, notably in the case of landowners who were prevailed upon last season to sell their rice through the bank, and are now far from satisfied with the accounts they have received. In consequence of this many influential men are refusing to deal any more with the Bank.

*Tabreez.*

1. His Majesty's Consul-General reports that an agitation was started in Urmi among the friends of Mirza Hussein Agha in favour of his immediate return. The movement was half-hearted, and Mr. Wratislaw is confident that, even should it become more strongly supported, the Governor will be able and willing to prevent any undesirable demonstration.

2. Referring to the subject of alleged Turkish encroachments on Persian territory in Azibaijan, the Governor of Urmi has received a letter from the Turkish Sheikh Sadik, claiming the district of Mergavar, which formerly belonged to his father, but was confiscated after the latter's invasion of Azerbaijan in 1880. Mr. Wratislaw draws attention to the fact that the Sheikh made a similar application some years ago; on that occasion, however, he asked to be allowed to buy the villages in question, whereas now he makes no suggestion of payment, but demands the property as being rightfully his.

*Tehran.*

The following new appointments are considered as certain:—

The Hissam-ul-Mulk, Governor of Hamadam, to be Deputy Governor of Kermanshah.

His Imperial Highness Salah-ed-Dowleh, Governor of Kurdistan, to be Governor of Luristan and Burujird. He is nominally Governor of Kermanshah also, but on hearing of the proposed appointment, all the chief persons of the town went to the telegraph office and informed the Shah that they declined to receive His Imperial Highness, and offered to pay 3,000 tomans a-year to be rid of him. The Salar is a cruel and oppressive Governor, and as incompetent as the other sons of the Shah.

Jellal-ed-Dowleh, eldest son of the Zil-es-Sultan, becomes Governor of Kurdistan.

The Firman Ferma goes to Kerman from Kermanshah and Luristan. He has already at least once held the Governor-Generalship of Kerman.

2. The Persian Government have issued a Circular ordering that members of the Corps Diplomatique and all Europeans are to carry night passes. The heads of Missions meet on the 3rd January to consider their reply.

3. The Shah is, considering his various maladies, in very fair health, and is constantly at Doshantepe, a residence about 6 miles from the town.

4. The principal Mujteheds are still (3rd January) at Shah Abdul Azim, and are in communication with Kerbela about their grievances. The general impression is that, if at least a portion of their demands is not granted, there may be serious disturbances in Tehran during the Moharrem.

5. The starving and filthy soldiers, who have hitherto formed the guard of His Majesty's Legation, have at the pressing request of His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires been removed, and a guard of Amir Bahadur Jang's own men have been installed. They are relatively clean, and appear to receive their wages regularly.

6. Early in December a Japanese, who purported to be a Buddhist priest, passed through Tehran. He was on his way to North-eastern Persia, and if possible was going into Afghanistan. Mr. Grant Duff gave him a letter of recommendation to His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Meshed. He was warned as to the danger of travelling in Afghanistan.

(Signed) J. A. DOUGLAS, Lieutenant-Colonel,  
Military Attaché.

January 4, 1906.

## MATTERS dealt with in separate Despatches.

Matters dealt with.	No. and Date of Despatch.
Kalat-i-Nadiri, Report on .. ..	No. 266, December 15, 1905.
Bakhtiari: Tribal affairs, Road, and Naphtha Con- cession .. ..	No. 267, Confidential, Decem- ber 20, 1905.
Bakhtiari Road .. ..	No. 268.
Sheikh of Mohammerah and Bakhtiari .. ..	No. 269, December 21, 1905.
Baku, situation at .. ..	No. 270, Confidential, Decem- ber 21, 1905.
D'Arcy Petroleum Concession .. ..	No. 271, December 21, 1905.
Kasvin-Hamadan Road .. ..	No. 272, " 23, "
Destruction of Seistan Mission buildings .. ..	No. 273, " 26, "
Majid-es-Sultaneh's affairs .. ..	No. 274, " 27, "
Cossack Brigade .. ..	No. 276, " 28, "
Condition of Persia and possibility of disturbances .. ..	No. 277, " 28, "
Sponge Exploration Syndicate .. ..	No. 279, " 30, "
Condition of Fars .. ..	No. 280, " 30, "
Embargo on sheep .. ..	No. 48, Commercial, Decem- ber 30, 1905.
Storage charges in Customs warehouses .. ..	No. 49, Commercial, Decem- ber 30, 1905.
Mr. Spring-Rice's appointment .. ..	No. 281, December 31, 1905.
Urmi murder case and attack on Captain Gough .. ..	No. 1, January 1, 1906.
Commercial statistics .. ..	No. 1, Commercial, January 1, 1906.

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No. 105.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)*

(No. 6. Confidential.)

Sir,

*Tehran, January 5, 1906.*

I RECENTLY paid a private visit to the Grand Vizier to thank him for the permission his Highness has frequently given to members of His Majesty's Legation to shoot in the neighbouring mountains. I avoided any allusion to politics, but just before I took leave his Highness asked me various questions regarding the composition of the new Government in England, and specially inquired what would be their policy in Persia.

I replied that as far as I was at present aware His Majesty's Government would not deviate from the traditional policy of Great Britain in regard to Persia, and that I had no doubt that His Majesty's new advisers, like their predecessors, desired to see Persia strong and independent.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

[4111]

No. 106.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)*

(No. 90.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, January 30, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you that the Persian Minister here, who is the son of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, has received an unexpected summons to return home at once. He told me that he expected to be absent a month. It is, however, rumoured that he will not return. I called upon him to wish him good-bye, and in the course of a long conversation he expressed himself in very pessimistic terms as to the state of his country. With regard to the financial situation, he admitted it to be very bad, but I could not ascertain from him what, if any, proposals had been made by the Russian Government. He informed me that M. Speyer, the present Russian Minister, was shortly to be removed, and that his successor would probably be the present Director of the Asiatic Department, M. Hartwig. I asked him what steps were being taken in relation to the disorders in the South and in Shiraz. He said that he had just received a telegram informing him that the Governor of Shiraz would

probably be shortly removed, and that a Delegate was being dispatched to Shiraz to inquire into the state of affairs. He thought that it would be difficult for the Belgians to maintain their position in view of the popular agitation against them. M. Naus would be retained, but the number of assistants of his own nation would be considerably curtailed.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

[3846]

No. 107.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Grant Duff.*

(No. 24.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, February 3, 1906.*

A FURTHER effort should be made by you to obtain Kuh-i-Malek Sia extension as *quid pro quo* for Mullah's return to Urumia, but, if you find this impossible, you may accept arrangement proposed in your telegram No. 33 of the 31st January.

[4288]

No. 108.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 5.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a letter from the Director of Military Operations, dated the 27th ultimo, and a paraphrase of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 1st instant, relative to a dispatch of guards to Persia.

*India Office, February 3, 1906.*

Inclosure 1 in No. 108.

*Director of Military Operations to India Office.*

THE Director of Military Operations presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for India, and, with reference to the telegram received from the Viceroy in India, dated the 11th instant, regarding the dispatch of troops to Persia in the event of disturbances there, is directed by the Chief of the General Staff to invite attention to the fact that the time given for the infantry detachment to reach Tehran from Bushire, via Shiraz, a distance of 761 miles, seems very short. To arrive in 43 days would mean continuous marching at the rate of nearly 18 miles a-day without a halt, while to arrive in 57 days would mean an average daily march of 13½ miles. After so long a march many members of the detachment would doubtless be unfit for duty, and those who did arrive fit would probably arrive too late to be of any use.

It is observed in the telegram in question that the Indian military authorities recognize that, in certain circumstances, the dispatch of small detachments across Persia might involve considerable risk; but, in the opinion of the General Staff, the dispatch to Tehran of so small and immobile a force as 50 infantry would, in any circumstances, be a dangerous measure so long as the country continues in its present unsettled state.

In view of the above, and of the fact that, under the conditions contemplated, rapidity of action would be essential, it would seem to be for consideration, assuming that it is eventually decided to send only a small force, whether a body of mounted men would not be preferable to infantry. Such a body would have a better chance of getting through the country and of arriving before it was too late. The section of the road Bushire to Shiraz is certainly said to be "a narrow mule-track, crossing a succession of mountain ranges by steep and difficult passes," but it is the regular post road, the post being carried by horsemen, and water is obtainable throughout. The remainder of the route apparently presents no special difficulties to the movement of mounted men.

*War Office, January 27, 1906.*

[1618]

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Inclosure 2 in No. 108.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*India Office, February 1, 1906.*

YOUR telegram of the 11th ultimo.

Risk of sending guards across Persia in small detachments has been pointed out by Director of Military Operations, who suggests that it might be preferable to employ mounted men rather than infantry, as they would have better chance of getting through the country, and of arriving rapidly at their destination, if dispatch of small force at present proposed should hereafter be decided upon.

I concur in view of Director of Military Operations as to the risk which would be involved; and I observe that, in the event of your being called upon to send guards, the question whether the risk is such as may reasonably be incurred is one which will be decided by your military authorities.

[4543]

No. 109.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 6.)*

(No. 35.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 6, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

“Beating of witness from Consulate by Vazir of Fars.

“According to a report which I have received from His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz, the muleteer who was beaten has given him a sealed statement to the effect that he was not in charge of the goods at all at the time of the robbery, but that his brother had taken over charge of them.

“The important point in the case, I venture to suggest, is that the muleteer was sent to the Persian authorities as a witness in support of a British claim, and that the Vazir arbitrarily beat him without informing His Majesty's Consul. If this sort of behaviour on the part of the Persian Government is permitted, there is no reason why they should not also ill-treat witnesses sent to them by His Majesty's Legation.

“No foreign Legation here would tolerate such conduct, and I earnestly hope that you will insist on the tender of the apology demanded. I hope that by next messenger I may be able to send a more detailed report.”

[4532]

No. 110.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 6.)*

(No. 36.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 6, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

“Troops for Robat.

“The Persian Government may be alarmed by our dispatch of troops to Robat, and I propose to make a verbal communication to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh in the sense of your telegram No. 15 of the 23rd January, first paragraph.”

[4542]

No. 111.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 6.)*

(No. 37.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 6, 1906.*

RUMOURED plague in Khorassan: my telegram No. 30.

Government of India telegraphs to His Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed as follows:—

“We do not want you to send the Agency Surgeon to Turbat-i-Sheikh Jam if the Russians have abandoned their scheme. You will have the best information as to this.”

Nothing is known by the Persian Government of the alleged dispatch of Cossacks to Turbat-i-Sheikh Jam.

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No. 112.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Hardinge.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, February 6, 1906.*

I HAVE received your letter of the 31st December, 1905, reporting upon the present condition of Persia, and the principal questions affecting British and commercial interests in that country.

I desire to thank you for this lucid and instructive account of the situation in Persia, which I have read with much interest.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[4554]

No. 113.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 7.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosure in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 11th January, relative to the plague in Seistan.

*India Office, February 6, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 113.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 9, 1906.*

ON the 7th January the Russian Chargé d'Affaires wrote to Sanitary Council that disease having broken out at neighbourhood of Zar, 12 miles from Husseinabad, the Russian Consular doctor had been sent to investigate, and pronounced it plague. He requested that precautions should be taken immediately, and Council have addressed Customs-house and Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

Please report at once, and, if necessary, send your doctor to investigate.  
(Addressed British Consul, Seistan, and repeated to Government of India.)

[4586]

No. 114.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 7.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 6th instant, relative to the proposed loan to the Persian Government.

*India Office, February 6, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 114.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*India Office, February 6, 1906.*

PLEASE refer to the telegram of the 31st ultimo from Grant Duff as to Persian loan. He has been informed in reply that decision of His Majesty's Government not to grant loan cannot be reconsidered. Instructions have been sent to Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg, with reference to the conversation recorded in Sir E. Grey's despatch of the 13th December last, to inform Count Lamsdorff in confidence that we have refused to grant loan. Mr. Spring-Rice is to intimate that, in the event of similar application being made by Persia to Russia, we expect reciprocity from Russian Government, but that if for any reason latter think it desirable to give financial assistance to Persia we are quite ready to discuss matter in a friendly spirit.

[4645]

No. 115.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 7.)*

(No. 38.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 7, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

“His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz telegraphs as follows:

“As the High Commissioner had given no definite answer to the malcontents, in spite of his repeated promises and delays, a deputation of the Shiraz trade guilds came to-day to the Consulate at mid-day, and asked that they and others might be allowed to take asylum here. I replied in the terms which you have already approved, but advised them to apply again to-day to the High Commissioner, and to exhaust all other channels before coming here.

“This evening they returned and reported that their application had had no result, and that they therefore intended to seek asylum here to-morrow.

“The Kerguzer, whom I saw and warned, begged me to temporize with the malcontents. I told him that I had already done so to the utmost of my ability, and urged him to communicate with the Mushir-ed-Dowleh by telegraph. I am writing to the High Commissioner to inform him.”

I have informed the Mushir-ed-Dowleh privately of the above, and have expressed a hope that steps will be taken by the Persian Government to calm the popular excitement at Shiraz.

[4646]

No. 116.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 7.)*

(No. 39.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 7, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

“My telegram No. 32.

“I have been privately and confidentially informed by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh's son that Russia is prepared to make a loan, but that her conditions are of such a nature that they would practically reduce Persia to a state of vassalage. He would not tell me what the conditions were, but said that they might, perhaps, be communicated later on. He asked whether His Majesty's Government would be disposed to advance a sum if it were placed under British control. I replied that I would report what he had said, but that His Majesty's Government would not reconsider their decision.

“The Mushir-ed-Dowleh again referred yesterday to the badness of the financial situation, and said that attempts were being made to raise a loan internally. He was not hopeful as to the success of the scheme.”

[4648]

No. 117.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 7.)*

(No. 40.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 7, 1906.*

FOLLOWING sent to India:—

“Kuh-i-Malik Siah extension.

“Your telegram to the India Office of the 6th February.

“I am endeavouring to obtain, in exchange for permission for the Mullah to return to Urmi, a concession for the construction of the Kuh-i-Malik Siah extension.

“At the request of His Majesty's Consul at Seistan, I asked in December last for permission for our signallers to work at Turbat and Birjand.”

[4532]

No. 118.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 26.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, February 7, 1906.*

WITH regard to the dispatch of a force to Robat, mentioned in your telegram No. 36 of the 6th instant, we leave the decision in this matter to your discretion.

[4738]

No. 119.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 8.)*

Sir,

*India Office, February 7, 1906.*

IN reply to Sir Eldon Gorst's letter of the 30th ultimo, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to say that he concurs in the terms of the draft telegram which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs proposes to send to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran regarding the status of Bahreinese in Persia.

Mr. Morley would however suggest, for Sir E. Grey's consideration, that it might be desirable to add to the communication to be made to the Persian Government a reference to the action taken by the British authorities for the protection of Persian traders in Bahrein from the attacks made on them in November 1904, and to the terms of the telegram sent on that occasion by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh to the Persian community in Bahrein.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[4666]

No. 120.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 8.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 6th instant, relative to affairs in Persia.

*India Office, February 7, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 120.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*February 6, 1906.*

PLEASE refer to the telegrams of the 29th and 31st ultimo from Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran. Government of India need not express any opinion as to the reply of the Persian Government so far as it relates to the firing on Gough and return of Urumia Mullah. With regard, however, to the proposed concession of signallers at Turbat and

[1618]

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Birjand we would point out that we have had Howson at latter place for a month, and that on the 8th December new signallers were already in Seistan on their way up; proposed concession, therefore, seems inadequate. We trust that some means may be found to overcome Shah's reluctance to agree to the Robat-Seistan telegraph; his attitude in this matter is very unreasonable, especially as the possibility of early communications between India and Seistan is rendered of importance owing to the plague in that province.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

[4769]

No. 121.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 8.)*

(No. 41.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 8, 1906.

FOLLOWING repeated to India and Bushire:—

“Henjam.

“His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire reported to India on the 10th January that the community of Arabs at Henjam, who recognize the sovereignty of the Sultan of Muscat, were prepared to resist Persian authority by force, and asked that, owing to the uncertain state of affairs prevailing in Persia, he might be authorized to suspend action on the orders which he had received, which were apparently to the effect that he was to inform the Arabs that Persian sovereignty in the island was recognized by His Majesty's Government. If he was to give an intimation to the Arabs to this effect, he said that a man-of-war should be sent.”

I telegraphed on the 20th January to India and Bushire that, in my opinion, notification should be delayed for the present.

I have now received the following telegram from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire:—

“Henjam Arabs. Please see inclosures in my letter of the 12th January.

“In the event of the Darya Beggi, who has now returned from India, starting to coerce the Arabs at Henjam, may I ask him in a friendly way to postpone his action, and, should he express inability to do so, may I request the Senior Naval Officer to send a ship to Henjam to protect them?

“With regard to the question of the customs building, I have arranged that M. Stas and the Director of Persian Gulf Telegraphs should meet on the 12th February at Henjam and come to an arrangement as to the sites, such arrangement to be subject to confirmation.”

His Majesty's Consul-General suggests that the Arabs might be offered British domicile at Bassidore, and I think we should protect them.

I propose to approve Consul-General's suggestions and await your instructions.

I am endeavouring to effect a settlement with the Mushir-ed-Dowleh with regard to the land question at Henjam.

[4751]

No. 122.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 8.)*

(No. 25.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, February 8, 1906.

PERSIAN loan.

I addressed a private letter to Count Lamsdorff, in the sense of your telegram No. 34 of the 2nd instant, on the subject of a loan to the Persian Government, and learnt to-day from his Excellency that he had received the Emperor's instructions to express to me His Majesty's satisfaction at the communication which I had made.

No. 123.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 8.)*

(No. 27.)

Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, February 8, 1906.

WITH reference to Mr. Grant Duff's telegram No. 39.

Persian loan.

It is difficult to reconcile Count Lamsdorff's language of yesterday with intentions attributed to Russian Government by Persian Minister, although it is true he might, as on a similar occasion in 1899, assert that he was not responsible for the action of the Finance Department. At the same time, the effect on public opinion in England of a loan to Persia on onerous conditions is well known to Count Witte. Offer mentioned in my despatch No. 772 may be that to which Persian Minister alludes.

[4830]

No. 124.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 9.)*

(No. 42.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 9, 1906.

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

“His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz telegraphs as follows:

“‘The appointment was announced this morning of Iqbal-ud-Dowleh to the Governorship of Fars. It has been greeted with much rejoicing and some scepticism. The shops are to reopen on Saturday. To-night the Shah Chiragh Mosque is illuminated, and the bazaars will be illuminated to-morrow.’”

Recall of Deputy Governor is also announced.

[4831]

No. 125.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 9.)*

(No. 43.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 9, 1906.

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

“I have telegraphed as follows to Mr. Consul-General Wratislaw at Urmi:

“‘As I am informed by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh that the Persian Government have no present intention of coercing the Kurds, it is useless for you to stay any longer at Urmi, and you should return to your post.’”

[4738]

No. 126.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Grant Duff.*

(No. 28.)

(Telegraphic.) En clair.

Foreign Office, February 9, 1906.

YOUR telegram No. 24 [of 25th January]. [Bahrein.]

It appears that although we have never acquiesced in Persian Government's pretensions, we have not made to them definite statement of our views, and present opportunity should be taken of doing so.

You should receive Persian note, and reply in following terms:—

Treaties of 1809, 1814, and 1857 have always been scrupulously observed by His Majesty's Government, but have no bearing on present question. We have never admitted ownership or sovereignty of Persia over Bahrein, and such a claim is wholly inadmissible. We consider island and its inhabitants to be under British protection, and must decline to entertain any further representations on the subject. This has been invariable reply to Turkish Government, who have on several occasions advanced a claim to Bahrein. You should refer to action taken by British authorities for protection of Persian traders in November 1904, and to terms of telegram sent on that

occasion by Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Persian community in island (see Major Cox of 17th December, 1904). You should conclude by stating that we must therefore maintain our right to use good offices on behalf of Bahreinese in Persia. You are instructed to report if any cases occur of their being subjected to molestation or injustice at hands of Persian authorities, in which event we will consider what further action is necessary.

[4133]

No. 127.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 16.)  
Sir,

*Foreign Office, February 9, 1906.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 280 of the 31st December, 1905, relative to the disturbed condition of affairs in the Province of Fars and the town of Shiraz.

I approve the terms of the note which you have addressed to the Persian Government on this subject.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[4142]

No. 128.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 17.)  
Sir,

*Foreign Office, February 9, 1906.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 6, Confidential, of the 5th ultimo, reporting a conversation with the Grand Vizier with regard to British policy in Persia.

I approve your language to the Ain-ed-Dowleh on this occasion.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[5061]

No. 129.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 10.)*

(No. 44.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 10, 1906.*

FOLLOWING sent to India and repeated to Seistan and Meshed:—

"I yesterday informed the Mushir-ed-Dowleh verbally that we were sending 200 men to Robat, as a precautionary measure in view of the outbreak of plague, and, in order, if required, to assist the Persian Government. I asked his Excellency to inform the authorities of Seistan and Khorassan.

"The Mushir-ed-Dowleh begged me to furnish him with a statement in writing, and I am sending him a note in the sense of the above."

[5255]

No. 130.

*Foreign Office to Treasury.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, February 12, 1906.*

WITH reference to your letter of the 8th August, 1901, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, copy of a letter from the India Office on the subject of the sepoy guards for the British Consulates in Persia.\*

I am to state, for their Lordships' information, that in May 1903 the strength of the Consular guards in Persia was fifty men. Of these, sixteen were originally assigned to Ispahan, but were subsequently divided between Ispahan and Tehran, the remaining thirty-four were distributed between the Consular establishments at Bushire, Kerman, Seistan, and Meshed.

As His Majesty's Consulate at Ispahan is controlled by this Department, the

\* India Office, December 20, 1905.

necessary provision has been made since 1902-3 in the Diplomatic and Consular Estimates for one-half of the cost of the guard maintained there (and afterwards at Tehran).

The other Consulates named being under Indian control, the cost of the guards has been defrayed in the first place by the Government of India, and has been presumably included as additional expenditure in the annual adjustment between the British and Indian Governments.

The Government of India now propose to increase the strength of the Consular guards to 152 men, and to provide guards at, in addition to the posts mentioned above, Tabreez and Shiraz, which are controlled by the Foreign Office, and at Bunder Abbas, Turbat-i-Haidari, Kermanshah, and Ahwaz, which are under Indian control. There would thus be twenty-eight men at posts controlled by this Department, and 124 men at posts controlled by the Government of India.

The additional expenditure involved is estimated at:—

	Rupees	a.	p.	£	s.	d.
Initial expenditure .. .. .	31,317	7	10	=	2,087	16 8
Annual recurring expenditure .. .. .	116,500	0	0	=	7,766	13 4

And the Secretary of State for India proposes, with Sir E. Grey's concurrence, to instruct the Government of India to include the additional cost, as it is incurred, in the annual statement of increases and decreases of expenditure on Persian establishments.

It is further proposed to treat in the same manner the whole cost of the Consular guards in Persia instead of making periodical claims on that account.

I am to express Sir E. Grey's hope that the Lords Commissioners will give their favourable consideration to these proposals.

It may be added that a substantial increase in the strength of the Consular guards has been rendered imperative by the present situation in Persia. The recent reports from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran point to a general feeling of unrest and insecurity throughout the country. The authority of the Central Government grows gradually weaker, and the Imperial troops are reported to be unreliable. A general or local anti-foreign outbreak might at any moment make it necessary for His Majesty's Consular officers and British residents in Persia to rely, at least temporarily, for their safety on the protection of the Consular guards.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GORST.

[5369]

No. 131.

*Sir A. Hardinge to Foreign Office.—(Received February 13.)*

Sir,

*Brussels, February 8, 1906.*

I HAVE received semi-officially from the Eastern Department the papers which I have the honour to return herewith, with a request that I should furnish my observations on the five points mentioned in the India Office letter of the 31st August, 1905.

With respect to question 1, it would not be possible for us to purchase the Sani-ed-Dowleh's Concession without the consent of the Persian Government, which would certainly be refused, at least so long as the Ain-ed-Dowleh remains Grand Vizier. The Concessions Law promulgated by the Shah two years ago would invalidate any such transfer; but it would be possible to come to an arrangement with the Sani-ed-Dowleh by which we should have a right to run motors jointly with his on all the roads in the country, and, from what he has himself said to me, I do not think this arrangement would present any difficulty. The Persian Transport Company has the monopoly of the traffic (under the old Concession granted to the Imperial Bank of Persia) on the road (96 miles long) from Tehran to Kum, along which the entire traffic from the south, south-west, and south-east, and even the heavy traffic from Kermanshah and Bagdad, has to pass. The Sani-ed-Dowleh must therefore either open up a new road (or, rather, reopen an old one) to the west via Robat, Kerim, P'ik, and Saveh, which, though feasible, would cost him more than he could well afford, or he must come to some arrangement with the Persian Transport Company. I should propose to allow him to run his cars on the Tehran-Kum section in return for a right to be given to the Transport Company to run theirs on all the roads east, south, and west of Kum. The



Transport Company might possibly contend that their monopoly extended not merely to the Kum road properly so called, but to its prolongations (Kum-Sultanabad and Kum-Ispahan). I should, however, rather doubt the expediency of pressing this view too strongly, and for practical purposes the Company's monopoly of the section Tehran-Kum gives it all the leverage we want in respect of the roads south and west of Kum.

It may, of course, be argued that the Sani-ed-Dowleh in granting these running powers from beyond Sultanabad and Ispahan would be acting *ultra vires*. Up to those two places he cannot help himself, as, the roads being held by British concessionnaires, who, as far as Kum, are undoubtedly monopolists, he will be forced to let our cars run along them, as he has been in the case of Russian cars on the Resht-Tehran road, on which, be it observed, the Russians have no legal monopoly of traffic. But, if the Persian Government were to say, which is not very likely (unless they were pressed to do so by the Russian Legation), that he had no right to allow our cars to run south of Ispahan, and that on that section of the great southern road he must enforce his monopoly, he could point out the impossibility of his doing so, in view of our power to prevent his using the Tehran-Kum road and of the physical difficulties in the way of his cars reaching Kum or even Ispahan by any route from the south. The opposition of the Persian Government to our running cars south of Ispahan or west of Sultanabad would in any case be nominal only. We can always reply: "Pacify Luristan and Arabistan, and enable Messrs. Lynch to carry out the Concession you have given them and extend their road to Dizful and Ahwaz."

Question 2 is answered by the above remarks. It would, I believe, cost nothing to obtain the share above described as distinct from the exclusive control of the Sani-ed-Dowleh's Concession, but it would doubtless be advisable that, on the conclusion of the Agreement with his Excellency, some small present (as a piece of plate) should, in accordance with Persian custom, be given to him by His Majesty's Minister.

Question 3. I could not, at this distance from Persia, venture upon any estimate of the cost of constructing a road usable by motors from Ispahan to Bushire. Up to Shiraz it might, I should think, be constructed for a few thousand pounds, say 5,000*l.*, as carriages can now go on the old road up to Khan-i-Kergan, about 10 miles south of Dehbid, but it would be necessary to build a new road from that point to near Persepolis (about 65 miles), and to bridge the Polvar at two or three places between Sivend and Zerghun and very greatly to improve the section from the latter town to Shiraz. There is an alternative road further east from Dehbid to Zerghun viâ Baonat, along which carriages have driven with some difficulty, but I have no personal knowledge of it; nor can I express any opinion as to the road from Shiraz to Bushire viâ Firuzabad, as the only one known to me by personal experience is the ordinary caravan track over the Kotels, which is impossible for wheeled traffic. I would, however, refer you to a despatch written, I think, in the summer of 1904 by His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz, and forwarded by me to Lord Lansdowne, which gives full details as to a proposal made to him to improve communications with Bushire, and which deals, if my memory is correct, with the Firuzabad route.

1. I agree with the remarks made by Mr. Llewellyn Smith as to the condition of the Resht road, especially with reference to the steepness of the gradients on the Caspian side; but, since Mr. Maclean last visited Persia, a Russian engineer, M. Poltoranoff, has, by order of the Russian Government, considerably improved it, especially in the swampy region of Gilan, where it was so frequently damaged by the heavy rains of winter. I should say, speaking personally, that the period during which the road could only be traversed with difficulty by motors would be on an average four months, rather than the seven in the year quoted by Mr. Llewellyn Smith.

I believe, however, that the future route by which Russian goods will enter Central Persia will not be the Resht, but the Tabreez one.

This latter route, which I have traversed on horseback and in carriages from Tehran to the Araxes, presents none of the physical difficulties encountered on the roads descending from the central table-land to the Caspian, the only steep bit being the stage between Jemalasad and Mianeh (12 miles), where it crosses the comparatively low range of hills called the Kaslan Kuh. It is a matter of public notoriety that the Russian Government are constructing this road, which, when I was in Azerbaijan in 1904, had only been begun north of Marand, in such a way as to enable it to be turned with very short notice into a railway; they are, in fact, building a road which will only need the rails to be placed on it to be turned into a railway line, and the same is the case with the new Kazvin-Hamadan branch.

The Trans-Caucasian railway system now extends to Russian Julfa on the north

[5379]

No. 131\*.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 13.)*

(No. 45.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 13, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India and Tabreez :—

Urmi murders.

I am informed by the American Minister that a further delay of ten months before the punishment of the murderers has been asked for by the Persian Minister at Washington. He asked for my opinion, and I told him that I thought that at the end of the specified time the case would probably be in the same unsatisfactory position. I recommended that the American Government should make very stringent conditions if they granted the delay.

bank of the Araxes, which, as you may remember, there forms the Russo-Persian frontier. Thence to Tehran it is about 420 miles by road, running over a generally easy country, though liable to occasional interruption by snow north-west of Zinjan during the months from November to April. I cannot but fear that once the road is put in proper order by the Russian Government the difficulties in the way of the motor service which the Board of Trade anticipates will be found to have been a good deal exaggerated.

The disturbed state of Russia, and especially of the Trans-Caucasian provinces, has retarded the execution of this enterprise, and has thus given us a chance of competition by improving the southern routes which we might not otherwise have obtained.

5. A full statement of my views as to the Government of India's proposal to obtain the right to build a road from Bunder Abbas to Bam will be found in a despatch which I had the honour to address to Lord Lansdowne in September last from Meshed after talking the question over with Major Sykes, whose views, based on the local knowledge acquired by him as His Majesty's Consul in Kerman, greatly modified the opinion I had originally formed as to the utility of this project. I need not, therefore, recapitulate them again.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) ARTHUR H. HARDINGE.

[5497]

No. 132.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 14.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 13th instant, relative to the proposed loan to the Persian Government.

*India Office, February 14, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 132.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*February 13, 1906.*

YOUR telegram of the 6th instant regarding Persian loan. Position, as I understand it, is that refusal of His Majesty's Government to grant loan has reference only to application already made, and that refusal by His Majesty's Government of any further request that may be made will be contingent upon Russia also refusing any advance. If this is the case, I have no remark to offer except that it will be necessary to insure that Russia does not, while ostensibly keeping promise, allow Banque des Prêts or any other indirect agency to make the loan, on the ground that she cannot interfere with the bank's commercial operations. I would refer to the equivocal proceedings of Russian Government, both as regards proposed joint loan and their own previous loans, as justifying our doubts of Russian procedure (*vide*, as to first loan, Lord G. Hamilton's telegram of the 1st February, 1900; *vide* also Lord Lansdowne's despatch to Sir C. Scott of the 3rd December, 1901, No. 316, written only one month before conclusion of 1902 loan). Unless categorical assurances on this point are forthcoming from Russia, I would even now suggest reconsideration of question of granting loan, provided that Persian Government accept condition that money lent should be expended under British control. This, it would seem, they are now prepared to do, since readiness of Russia to grant loan, though on most stringent terms, is indicated by despatches from both St. Petersburg and Tehran.

Possibility of general anarchy supervening in Persia, owing to want of funds, if both Powers refuse loan, and of risk that we may thereby be involved in measures for restoration of order, has, I presume, been considered by His Majesty's Government.

[5509]

No. 133.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 14.)*

(No. 46.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 14, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India :—

“Your telegram No. 24 of the 3rd February.

“Telegraphic extension to Kuh-i-Malik Siah is refused by Persian Government. They say that there are certain difficulties, one of which is the fact that the Russians have demanded a telegraph line from Resht to Tehran, which the Shah has refused to grant.

“I was confidentially informed to-day by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh that they would reconsider the question of the extension if we raised it later on.

“I have withdrawn opposition to the Mullah's return on the conditions stated in my telegram No. 33. He is ill, and has just lost his son.”

[4543]

No. 134.

*Memorandum communicated to the Persian Minister, February 14, 1906.*

ON the 5th instant the Persian Minister was informed that the explanation offered by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh of the recent incident at Shiraz, when the Vazir of Fars caused punishment to be inflicted on a muleteer who had been sent to him as a witness by His Majesty's Consul, had been referred to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran.

His Excellency stated that the muleteer had been punished for culpable negligence in guarding the goods intrusted to his care. It appears, however, from a telegram received from Mr. Grant Duff, that the man gave to His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz a sealed statement to the effect that, at the time of the robbery, he was not in charge of the goods, but that these had been handed over to the care of his brother. The accuracy of the account supplied to the Persian Government would therefore seem open to question.

His Majesty's Government consider that, in any case, the action of the Vazir in punishing a man sent to him to give evidence by the British Consul, without previously communicating with the latter on the subject, was a highly improper proceeding, which might reasonably give ground for a claim for pecuniary compensation from the Persian Government. They have, however, confined themselves to demanding that a suitable apology should be offered by the Vazir to His Majesty's Consul. They must insist on this apology, and, if the Persian Government continue their refusal to issue the necessary orders, they will be compelled to reconsider their attitude in the matter.

*Foreign Office, February 14, 1906.*

[4543]

No. 135.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 30.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, February 14, 1906.*

A COMMUNICATION had already been made by me to the Persian Minister in the sense suggested in your telegram No. 35 of the 6th February respecting the molestation of a witness at Shiraz. He has now been informed that some doubt attaches to the accuracy of the account supplied to the Persian Government, and that, in any case, the punishment of the man by the Vazir, without previously communicating with His Majesty's Consul, was a highly improper proceeding, for which a claim for pecuniary compensation from the Persian Government might reasonably be put forward by His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government have, however, confined themselves to demanding an apology, on which they insist, and they will be forced to reconsider their attitude in the matter unless the Persian Government comply with this demand.

[5713]

No. 136.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 16.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 15th instant, relative to the dispatch of guards to Persia.

*India Office, February 16, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 136.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*February 15, 1906.*

YOUR telegram of the 1st instant as to guards for Persia. While winter conditions prevail, cavalry would be unable to cross ranges between Bushire and Ispahan; it was for this reason that in our telegram of the 11th ultimo we proposed infantry as having better chance of getting through the country. Risk involved in sending small parties across Persia was fully recognized by us when we undertook, subject to condition which will be within your recollection, to decide whether that risk might reasonably be incurred. We have since received Sir A. Hardinge's note of the 23rd December, 1905, and other information which indicates that situation in Persia may become critical at any moment owing to want of funds. So far the only question we have considered is that of strengthening guards of British Legation and Consulates against temporary disturbances. We observe that, in letter from Foreign Office of the 28th December, 1905, the suggestion was made that force should be made available for despatch with least possible delay to Tehran, or any other part of Persia, should necessity arise owing to disturbances or other causes. If His Majesty's Government contemplate the more serious measures which appear to be indicated in the Foreign Office letter of the 28th December, 1905, we shall no doubt be informed at the earliest possible date, as the arrangements for the dispatch of the necessary force would require discussion and time for preparation.

[5636]

No. 137.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 16.)*

(No. 39.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*St. Petersburg, February 16, 1906.*

PERSIAN finance.

With reference to your telegram No. 34.

Count Lamsdorff has written to me privately asserting that, according to information which he has received, negotiations are in course for a loan of 150,000*l.* (75,000*l.* being for repayment of former advances) between the Persian Government and the Imperial Bank. That Persia should accept the MacMahon Award is one of the conditions of this loan.

In his letter Count Lamsdorff adds: “I cannot refrain from pointing out, in confidentially communicating this information, that Sir Edward Grey's declaration seems inconsistent with this report.”

[5636]

No. 138.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Spring-Rice.*

(No. 42.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, February 16, 1906.*

THE report mentioned in your telegram No. 39 of to-day on the subject of loan negotiations is entirely without foundation. It is probable that the Persians them-

[1618]

2 G

selves have spread the report, in the hope that the Russian Government may be thereby induced to grant them a fresh loan. Far from making a further loan, an attempt is now being made by the Imperial Bank to recover from the Persian Government a part of the money already advanced.

[4138]

No. 139.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 16, 1906.*  
I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, respecting the Lur attack on Colonel Douglas and Captain Lorimer, and the question of obtaining compensation from the Persian Government.

It will be observed that Mr. Grant Duff considers that a strong message from His Majesty's Government might have some effect in inducing the Persian Government to take energetic action for the punishment of the guilty Lurs.

As regards compensation, it was, as Mr. Morley is aware, recently decided that the matter need not be pressed for the present, but, in view of the note from the Mushir-ed-Dowleh of the 31st December, 1905, it appears desirable that the Persian Government should be informed that His Majesty's Government maintain the views previously expressed to them on the subject.

I am to transmit herewith copy of a telegram which Sir E. Grey proposes, if Mr. Morley concurs in its terms, to address to Mr. Grant Duff in reply to his despatch.†

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GORST.

[4137]

No. 140.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 21.)

Sir,

*Foreign Office, February 17, 1906.*

I HAVE received your despatch No 1 of the 1st ultimo relative to the Urmi inquiry.

I approve the terms of the communications which you addressed to the Persian Government on this subject in conjunction with your United States' colleague.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[5865]

No. 141.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 18.)*

(No. 48.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 18, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

“Situation in Persia.

“I am informed by the French Chargé d'Affaires that the Russians have refused to consider the question of making a loan unless M. Naus represents Persia in the negotiations. It is stated that he has been summoned from Constantinople. My informant added that the Russians are insisting on the dismissal of the Grand Vizier.

“Moharrem begins on the 25th February, and it is generally believed that there will be trouble here during the month. The Mollahs, who are receiving strong support from outside, are certainly much excited. On account of his intrigues with them, the Minister of Commerce has just been exiled to Yezd.

“Agitation, if it occurs, will not be directed against Europeans, but against the Government.”

[5866]

No. 142.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 18.)*

(No. 49.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 18, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India and St. Petersburg:—

“Persian loan:

“St. Petersburg telegram of the 16th February and my telegram No. 176 of last year.

“The Manager of the Imperial Bank has received the following telegram from his Directors:

“‘We have agreed, at the urgent request of the Persian Minister, not to protest the draft of the 13th February if the promissory note be renewed by Persian Government, and if they will give you Persian Gulf Customs drafts as collateral security. Payment to be made before the 20th September next in three instalments.

“‘With regard to the letter addressed to Mr. Spring-Rice by Count Lamsdorff, it seems to me probable that the Russian Financial Agent is making mischief with the Persian Government. He is opposed to any agreement with England regarding Persia. He is, moreover, a very ambitious man, and I suspect that he has been intriguing to secure the post of Minister here in place of M. de Speyer, who informs me that he is to be transferred to another post.’”

[5881]

No. 143.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 8.)

Sir,

*Tehran, January 18, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a communication from Messrs. Lynch Brothers' agent at Tehran, inclosing statistics of the traffic on the Bakhtiari Road for the years 1903 to 1905, exclusive of all outside caravans with local goods and passengers.

You will see from the figures given that the imports by that route are increasing greatly. As I reported in my despatch No. 568 of the 20th December, the Persian Government have sent a special official to deal with the constant cases of robbery on the road, and I have recently been informed by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh that Messrs. Lynch will be compensated for their losses at an early date.

The dispatch of the Mamur will perhaps improve matters for a short time, but it is only too probable that after a few months highway robberies will be as frequent as ever.

The Bakhtiari Chiefs have just arrived in Tehran, and I shall take an early opportunity of discussing with them the question of the security of the road. They are, I think, very ready to do what they can to keep order, but are much handicapped by the corrupt and inefficient Government officials, who throw every possible obstacle in their way.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 143.

*Messrs. Lynch Bros. to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

Sir,

*Tehran, January 15, 1906.*

IN reply to your inquiry as to the amount of traffic now passing over the Ahwaz-Ispahan Road, we have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of statistics which we have received from our Ispahan agent, showing the amount of merchandize handled by us during the last three years.

We are, &c.  
(Signed) LYNCH BROS.



## Inclosure 2 in No. 143.

STATISTICS of Traffic between Ispahan and Ahwaz, and *vice versa*, exclusive of all outside Caravans with Local Goods and Passengers, during 1903 to 1905.

				1903.		1904.		1905.	
				Packages dispatched.	Packages arrived.	Packages dispatched.	Packages arrived.	Packages dispatched.	Packages arrived.
January	..	..	..	..	34	38	93	16	571
February	..	..	..	..	16	..	..	86	14
March	..	..	..	140	..	104	184	191	432
April	..	..	..	70	120	192	110	401	19
May	..	..	..	120	358	29	1,054	199	348
June	..	..	..	562	148	184	1,170	230	2,641
July	..	..	..	422	340	988	744	270	1,155
August	..	..	..	100	665	812	445	1,193	625
September	..	..	..	282	372	903	1,339	104	677
October	..	..	..	322	744	305	953	784	1,626
November	..	..	..	388	494	487	958	51	1,734
December	..	..	..	90	924	16	779	564	989
Total	..	..	..	2,496	4,215	4,058	7,889	4,089	10,831

[5883]

No. 144.

Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 10.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 27, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to receive the Marquess of Lansdowne's despatch No. 170 of the 7th ultimo regarding the King's birthday and Kuhak incidents, which are both now happily closed. I have no wish to reopen either; but I have the honour to call attention to two grave omissions in the Mushir-ed-Dowleh's communication to the Ala-es-Saltaneh.

1. His Excellency omits to mention that the whole Legation staff waited from 11 A.M. to 1 P.M. in uniform to receive the Shah's Representative, and that written notice had been given fixing these hours in accordance with precedent.

2. The Mushir-ed-Dowleh omits the important point that he had, as reported in my telegram No. 138 of the 1st November, 1905, verbally promised to give me a written undertaking previous to the demolition that the Persian Government would re-erect the Kuhak buildings if hereafter required to do so.

I respectfully venture to think that his Excellency's omission to mention the above points shows the necessity of receiving the representations of the Persian Legation in London as to incidents here with extreme caution.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

[5884]

No. 145.

Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 11.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 27, 1906.

WITH reference to Sir A. Hardinge's despatch No. 180 of the 21st August, 1905, and my telegram No. 24 of the 25th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of a note which I have received from the Mushir-ed-Dowleh regarding the claims of the Persian Government to Bahrein. In telegraphing the substance of his Excellency's note to you, I ventured to express the opinion that although the language of the inclosed communication was not actually uncivil, its tone appeared to me to be open to objection. In these circumstances, I had the honour to ask for your instructions as to whether I should decline to receive it.

The note bears every mark of being the Shah's own composition, as I doubt whether either the Grand Vizier or the Mushir-ed-Dowleh would, on their own initiative, have addressed such a communication to the Representative of a foreign Government.

I am confidentially informed that the tone at the Persian Court is very anti-European, the Shah and his courtiers apparently believing that what Japan can do Persia is also in a position to accomplish.

In a country where the Administration is hardly on a level with that of Hayti or San Domingo, and where the chief power is in the hands of a Sovereign compared to whom Bomba was an enlightened patriot, such pretensions can only excite mirth, but I have reported the matter as a curious and, perhaps, significant effect of the late Russo-Japanese war on Persian thought.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 145.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.

(Translation.)

January 9, 1906.

IN reply to the note addressed by the British Legation respecting the natives of Bahrein, I have the honour to state that, in the case of Bahrein and its inhabitants, the Persian Government who consider that place its own unquestionable property and its people its own subjects, and who, in accordance with the sacred Treaties, expected every assistance from the friendly Power in case of any emergency, see that during this time, contrary to the Treaties of 1809, 1814, and 1857, all steps taken by the English officials had no other object but to weaken the allegiance of the people and the Sheikhs of Bahrein to the Persian Government, and to establish their own authority in the *bona fide* property of the Persian Government, as it has been also meant in the note under reply. Frequent representations and protests have been made both here and in London, but although the British Government have taken no exception to the ownership and Sovereignty of Persia over Bahrein, the British Government have not allowed Persian legal rights to be enforced there.

The present proposals for the intervention of the British Consul-General on behalf of the Bahreinis, who are Persian subjects, is one proof of the compromising of the rights of the Persian Government over their ancient subjects. Such is the new title given to the Sheikh of Bahrein, calling him the owner of that place and concluding Treaties with him. Under these circumstances the Persian Government is obliged first to protest against all such measures, which are, in fact, taking possession of and interfering with its lawful territories and subjects, and, secondly, to request His Britannic Majesty's Government not to lose sight of the Treaty obligations, and that it should be their earnest desire to confirm the allegiance of the Persian subjects to His Imperial Majesty the Shah, as it is expressly stipulated in the Treaty of 1857.

[5885]

No. 146.

Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 12.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 27, 1906.

IN obedience to the instructions contained in your telegram No. 16 of the 23rd instant, I addressed the note, copy of which I inclose, to the Grand Vizier, stating that His Majesty's Government, having carefully considered his Highness' request for a loan and the securities and conditions which he offered, regretted that they did not see their way to comply with it in the present circumstances.

On the 25th instant, the Grand Vizier's Secretary, Momtaz-ed-Dowleh, called on me and inquired on behalf of the Grand Vizier what His Majesty's Government meant by the words "in the present circumstances." I replied that I had given in my note the exact words of your communication, which I had no instructions to interpret more fully. I added that if his Highness desired further explanations, I was, of course, ready to lay the matter before you.

[1618]

The Grand Vizier had, I think, fully counted on obtaining a loan from His Majesty's Government, and their decision will in all probability make his Highness more intractable than ever.

It is the general impression here that unless he can raise money from Russia, his fall is a matter of weeks.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 146.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to the Grand Vizier.*

(Translation.)  
(Confidential.)

January 24, 1906.

AT the end of last November, your Highness asked me to apply to His Majesty's Government for a loan of 800,000*l.* to the Persian Government.

I at once brought the matter to the notice of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and have to-day received instructions to inform your Highness that His Majesty's Government have carefully considered your request and the securities and conditions which you offer, but that they regret that they do not, in the present circumstances, see their way to comply with it.

[5887]

No. 147.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 14.)  
Sir,

Tehran, January 29, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copies of correspondence with the Persian Government on the subject of the attack made by the Kurds on Captain Gough, His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah, while he was on special duty at Urmi in November 1904.

You will see that the Persian Government assert that no attack was made on Captain Gough, but that that officer galloped towards the Kurds, who, thinking that they were being pursued, fired in self-defence. It does not appear from the copy of Captain Gough's report, which the Mushir-ed-Dowleh forwards, that he did gallop in the direction of the Kurds; but, even if he had done so, it hardly constitutes a reasonable excuse for firing over twenty shots at close range at a British Consular Officer, and I pointed this out to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh in my note of the 13th instant.

Having regard to the fact that over a year has elapsed since the outrage and no attempt has been made by the Persian Government to arrest Captain Gough's assailants, I respectfully submit that the reply given by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh to the representations made by Sir Arthur Hardinge and myself displays a tendency to trifle with His Majesty's Government.

As the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, whom I unofficially urged without result to withdraw the inclosed note, shows no desire to give any satisfaction for the treatment accorded to Captain Gough, I had the honour to-day to ask in my telegram No. 28 your instructions as to what further action I am to take in the matter. I may add that I am inquiring from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Tabreez, where the Mushir-ed-Dowleh obtained his copy of Captain Gough's report.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 147.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

January 7, 1906.

WITH regard to previous correspondence and conversations respecting the alleged attack on Captain Gough at Urmi by the Kurds, I have the honour to state that, according to the inquiries made and reports received by the Foreign Office, the Kurds did not attack the officer in question. Captain Gough and his escort galloped towards

the Kurds while they were escaping, and the latter fired a few shots as they thought they were being pursued. They fired to defend themselves until they could find a shelter. The proof of this statement is a letter addressed by Captain Gough to the British Consul-General at Tabreez on the 22nd November, 1904. A translation of the said letter is herewith inclosed, and I am prepared to send you an English copy, should you desire it. The escape of the Kurds cannot be taken for an attack. According to the letter in question, the Captain galloped towards the hills, but the Kurds did not come towards the Captain, who, you will agree with me, ought not to have galloped towards them. If he had not done so they would not have fired on him, as they had not formed any design of doing so.

Inclosure 2 in No. 147.

*Captain Gough to Consul-General Wratistaw.*

(Forwarded to the British Legation by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh.)

Urmi, November 22, 1904.

I HAVE telegraphed to you that I was attacked on Saturday last (the 19th November), and the following are the details, which I have also sent direct to Tehran:—

I was out with two of my escort in uniform, mounted, and armed, and I also had a couple of ghulams mounted, but unarmed. At about 4.45 p.m. (quite light) I saw four men run across the road, getting their rifles off their shoulders. I must explain that it took place about 2 miles away from the town, at the foot of the hills separating Urmi from the Dasht Plain, near a village called Dizrah. I thought the men were running towards the hills afraid of being attacked by my party, so I kept on, though I warned my sowars to get out some ammunition. I then saw four or five more men running down the hill towards the first lot and all handling their rifles. So when I saw them load, I galloped, and, though we were fired at, we were not touched. The men were then, I suppose, about 100 yards off. We got behind a ridge and dismounted, and I took one of my sowar's rifles, and the other sowar and I went to the crest, and we were fired at again directly we showed ourselves. So we fired a few shots. The Kurds, however, got higher up the hill and began firing at our horses, so we went off to another higher ridge and began firing again. The Kurds again got higher up and one or two men got round each side, so I saw it was time to be off. It had also become rather dark, so we galloped off under a few more dropping shots. Their shots came unpleasantly close, but we were none of us hit, and I am afraid none of them were either. Directly I got back to this college, I sent a man to Dizrah to find out who these men were. He was told that a party of eight Kurds, followers of Tamar Beg, Baghzade, had been near for two or three days and had robbed from their village.

Inclosure 3 in No. 147.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

January 13, 1906.

I HAD the honour to receive your note of the 7th instant, in which you state that Captain Gough was not attacked by the Kurds in November 1904, but that the latter fired on him in self-defence because he galloped in their direction. I desire to draw your Excellency's attention to the fact that in Captain Gough's report, copy of which you inclose, he does not state that he galloped towards the Kurds. But even should he have done so, I cannot conceal my astonishment that the Persian Government should consider this an adequate reason for the discharge of over twenty shots at a British Consular officer with the obvious intent of killing him.

As I had the honour to inform your Excellency verbally on Wednesday last, I shall forward a translation of your Excellency's note to His Majesty's Government as soon as possible, and shall no doubt receive their instructions in due course.

[5888]

No. 148.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 15.)

My Lord,

*Tehran, January 29, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to report that no satisfactory progress has been made by the Persian Government towards settling the long outstanding Urmi case.

In the voluminous correspondence on the subject, copy of which I have the honour to inclose, you will see that early in January the Persian Government ordered an expedition to proceed against the Kurds, with a view to recapture the accomplices in the Labaree murder by force. The Persian Government have now officially informed both Mr. Pearson, the United States' Minister, and myself, in answer to our joint note of the 11th December, 1905, that, owing to the frontier dispute with Turkey, it is against the interests of Persia to take severe measures against the Kurds, but that special officials have been nominated "to persuade the Kurds, and bring them peaceably to Urmi." Mr. Pearson and I, as I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 28 of to-day's date, consider that the excuse given by the Persian Government is a mere pretext to delay the settlement of the case, and we think that, in view of the answer received to our note, it would serve no useful purpose to see the Grand Vizier, or apply for an audience and lay the matter before the Shah, as we had decided to do. Mr. Pearson has therefore referred the whole case to Washington for instructions in his despatch of the 19th instant, copy of which is inclosed. In that despatch Mr. Pearson draws attention to the fact that the 9th March, the date by which the Persian Government undertook to punish the leading accomplices or become liable to pay the balance of the indemnity demanded, is near at hand, and inquires what action he is to take should the Persian Government offer to pay the money in question, or take no steps to settle the case. He informed me privately that he does not think the United States' Government will accept the sum referred to, but will take measures to force the Persian Government, should it become necessary to do so, to punish the Kurds concerned in the murder.

In the above circumstances, it would seem useless to detain Mr. Wratislaw any longer at Urmi. He reports that his withdrawal will not compromise the safety of the Christians living in Azerbaijan, and I propose, with your sanction, to instruct him to return to Tabreez.

In Mr. Pearson's letter to me of the 18th instant, copy of which I have the honour to inclose, while thanking Mr. Wratislaw and myself for such assistance as we have been able to afford, he states that he knows that the United States' Government will not be willing to tax the generosity of His Majesty's Government by asking them to keep His Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez indefinitely from his post in order to attend a trial which may never take place.

I have verbally assured Mr. Pearson that I am confident that His Majesty's Government are ready at all times to instruct Mr. Wratislaw to do what he properly can to protect American interests in Azerbaijan, but that I agree that his further stay at Urmi is useless, and I have so reported to you.

I am dealing with the attack on Captain Gough in a separate despatch.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 148.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Consul-General Wratislaw.*

(No. 2.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, January 6, 1906.*

AMERICAN Mission's message. Your telegram of the 3rd January.

Both Mr. Pearson and myself consider that it would be impossible for you with safety and propriety to undertake to receive, independently of Persian military authorities, submission of the Kurds. We will consider question of punishment when Kurds have been recaptured. Expedition against the Kurds is, in our opinion, both necessary and salutary, and we have repeatedly requested the Persian Government to carry it out.

American Mission should be informed accordingly.

Inclosure 2 in No. 148.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mr. Pearson.*

Sir,

*Tehran, January 6, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith paraphrase of a telegram which I have received from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urmi with regard to the steps being taken to induce the Kurds accused of complicity in the murder of Mr. Labaree to come in.

I also inclose a message from the American Mission at Urmi, which they have requested Mr. Wratislaw to forward to you through His Majesty's Legation.

I have, &c.

(Signed) E. GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 3 in No. 148.

*Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 3.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Urmi, January 3, 1906.*

THE Governor was to have met the Kurds who recently came to Bender, but before he could arrive they began fighting among themselves, and dispersed. I was informed to-day by the Governor that, as he had failed to induce the Kurds to come in peaceably, he had now called out 1,500 Kurds of other tribes, and would proceed to use force. I still think it likely that our Kurds will give in at the last moment, though they give out that they will offer resistance, and have fortified four of their villages.

Inclosure 4 in No. 148.

*Message from the American Mission at Urmi for his Excellency the Honourable Richmond Pearson, transmitted by Consul-General Wratislaw in his telegram of January 3, 1906.*

WE agree emphatically as to British Consul-General, and therefore desire that he be definitely empowered to avail himself of submission which the Kurds, in face of military expedition, have shown themselves much more likely to make to a British or American Representative than to Persians, whom they entirely mistrust; Wratislaw should be assured that his action will have the support of the United States' Government. We believe that prompt and final settlement might thus be made and much bloodshed and suffering be avoided.

Inclosure 5 in No. 148.

*Mr. Pearson to Mr. Root.*

(Telegraphic.)

*January 8, 1906.*

PERSIAN Government finally has ordered an expedition 1,500 strong to recapture Kurd accomplices by force. Kurds have assembled clans behind fortifications and await attack. Missionaries at Urmi, after insisting on armed expedition as the only course effective, now recoil at prospect of bloodshed, and earnestly request me by wire to make terms with the tribe through the British Consul-General independently of Persian authorities. I have declined their request. Has this your approval?

British Minister and I concur in the belief that force is the only effective measure, and that the expedition will have a good effect. See my despatch, the 8th July, 1904.

(The reference is to identic note signed by Sir A. Hardinge and myself.)

Secretary of State has to-day cabled me that my refusal to comply with request of missionaries is approved.

(Initialled) R. P.

January 9, 1906.

Inclosure 6 in No. 148.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mr. Pearson.*

Sir,

*Tehran, January 18, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the paraphrase of a telegram received to-day from Mr. Wratislaw regarding affairs at Urmi.

I hear that Sahm-ul-Mulk is to replace the present Governor. Although a change of Governor at this juncture is hardly wise, the fact that Sahm-ul-Mulk is a relative of Mushir-ed-Dowleh makes it difficult to ask his Excellency to reconsider the matter.

I have the honour to draw your special attention to the fact that Moharrem is approaching, and that the month of mourning will no doubt be made the excuse for further delay.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) E. GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 7 in No. 148.

*Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*January 15, 1906.*

I AM informed by Governor that he has received confidential message that he will be shortly appointed to the Governorship of Ardebil. Can you find out whether this is a fact without compromising him? At present moment it would be most impolitic to change Governor.

Labaree case does not progress, and Governor, in consequence of above message, appears to have lost his energy. As winter is nearly half over and Moharrem is at hand, it is urgent that matter should be pressed at Tehran.

Inclosure 8 in No. 148.

*Resolution adopted by the Annual Meeting of the Western Persia Mission of the American Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.*

WHEREAS since the first information was received of the murder of the Rev. B. W. Labaree up to the present, a period of more than a year and a-half, we have been constantly indebted to His Britannic Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez for protection against danger, and for his efforts to secure justice at the hands of the Persian Government, often at the cost of great personal inconvenience to himself.

Resolved that we, the American Presbyterian Mission in session assembled, express our heartfelt gratitude to A. C. Wratislaw, C.M.G., His Britannic Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez, for his untiring help in our sore troubles and in personal sympathy in our sorrows, and also to Hildebrand F. Stevens, Esq., Acting His Britannic Majesty's Consul-General, for his constant interest in us and his activity in our behalf.

(Signed) W. A. SHEDD,  
*Moderator of Annual Meeting.*

*Tabreez, October 10, 1905.*

Inclosure 9 in No. 148.

*Mr. Pearson to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

*American Legation, Tehran, January 18, 1906.*

I BEG to hand you herewith a copy of note from the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, from which it appears that the indecision and procrastination of the Persian Government

are without any definite limits, and that the time for the trial of the Kurds cannot even be approximated.

I know that my Government would not be willing to tax your generosity indefinitely in asking you to keep Consul-General Wratislaw away from his post and from his family in order to attend a trial that may never take place.

I therefore suggest that you give him such instructions as the interests of your Government may require.

In the name of the American Government I thank most sincerely both you and him for your generous, ungrudging, and steadfast devotion to the interests of American citizens in North-West Persia.

Inclosure 10 in No. 148.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. Pearson.*

Your Excellency,

*January 14, 1906.*

YOUR message regarding the delay which has occurred in sending a reply to your note of the 14th December, 1905, concerning the trial of the Kurds, brought by Mr. Tyler, has been communicated to me.

As Mr. Tyler stated that no response had been made to the note, it is necessary that I should inform you that on the receipt of the same it was considered advisable to send Hussein Kuli Khan to the Legation to bring to your Excellency's notice certain difficulties which had transpired.

I desire now again to state that, considering the differences which have occurred on the frontier with the Turkish Government, it is for certain reasons not advisable that the Persian Government should take any strong measures against the Kurds.

In view of this fact, special Commissioners on the part of the Government have gone into the midst of the Kurds to endeavour to induce them to attend the trial at Urmi. At this particular time more than this is not convenient for the Government, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs trusts that the Legation will not lay upon it a duty the performance of which is fraught with much difficulty, and accord it a little space that, with the means in view, it may speedily and peaceably present them in Urmi to take their trial.

I avail, &c.  
(Scaled) Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

Inclosure 11 in No. 148.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

*January 18, 1906.*

IN reply to your note of the 11th ultimo, which you and the United States' Minister jointly signed, respecting the trial of the Kurds, I have the honour to state that, as I have already informed the American Minister in my note of the 14th instant, in view of the present differences with the Turkish Government respecting the frontier, it is against the interest of the Imperial Government of Persia to take severe measures in the matter. Some special officials have therefore been nominated to persuade the Kurds and bring them peacefully to Urmi.

Since no other measure will be convenient to the Government, the Foreign Office expects that the British Legation will not make proposals, the execution of which may be inconvenient to the Persian Government. By the means contemplated the Kurds will be brought to Urmi and the inquiries into the matter will be made.

Inclosure 12 in No. 148.

*Mr. Tyler to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

Dear Mr. Grant Duff,

*American Legation, Tehran, January 24, 1906.*

MR. PEARSON has instructed me to send for your information the two inclosed copies of papers referring to the Labaree case.

Yours, &c.  
(Signed) JOHN TYLER.



Inclosure 13 in No. 148.

*Report by Mr. Tyler of an Interview with the Mushir-ed-Dowleh on January 17, communicated to Mr. Pearson.*

THE Mushir-ed-Dowleh, in reply to your question, "Were the Kurd prisoners released with the knowledge or by the authority of the Persian Government?" said the men were not released with the knowledge or by the authority of the Persian Government, and added that when the men were on the way, between Tabreez and Urmi they asked permission of Mirza Baker Khan, the Commissioner, to go to their villages for two or three days to look after their affairs, as they had been away for a considerable time, promising that they would then surrender themselves at Urmi.

(Signed) JOHN TYLER.

*American Legation, Tehran,  
January 17, 1906.*

Inclosure 14 in No. 148.

*Mr. Pearson to Mr. Root.*

Sir, *American, Legation, Tehran, January 19, 1906.*  
THE terms of agreement in the Labaree case, accepted by the Persian Government on the 3rd January, 1905, contained the following provision, to wit:—

2. "If the leading accomplices, notoriously identified as participants in the crime, and living within the jurisdiction of Persia, shall not have been captured and punished according to the measure of their guilt before the 9th March, 1906 . . . then, and in any such event, so much of the indemnity as is hereby remitted—to wit, the sum of 20,000 dollars—shall immediately become due and payable just as if no reduction had been made in the total amount conceded by the Persian Government, it being the purpose and intent of both Governments, in concluding this form of settlement, to prevent as far as possible the recurrence of similar crimes."

By reference to the telegram of the late Secretary Hay, dated the 29th December, 1904, it will be seen that the other conditions set forth by me and demanded as a basis of settlement were specifically approved; but as to the payment of this 20,000 dollars, conditionally abated, he was significantly silent, and I inferred that he did not intend to enforce this penalty.

In the despatch confirming his telegram he was again silent on the subject.

In a note which I addressed to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 4th October, 1905, I used the following language, to wit:—

"I have been led to believe that the Kurdish tribes in sympathy with the accused are willing to pay to the widow of Mr. Labaree the 20,000 dollars which was conditionally abated from the amount of the indemnity, and that the prisoners expect release on such terms; but I now notify your Excellency, in the most emphatic terms, that my Government will never assent to even consider such a disposition of this case. Gold cannot atone for American blood. Punishment, 'according to the measure of their guilt,' is the only reparation which my Government will accept, and for this it relies upon the strict performance of the pledge above set forth, in which you solemnly bind the honour and faith of Persia."

The period within which the Persian Government undertook to punish the accomplices will expire the 9th March, 1906. The Department is aware that the chief accomplices were captured last February, brought to Tehran, held here for seven months, and then remanded to Urmi for trial; they escaped or were liberated on the way, and have since defiantly refused to surrender or appear at the trial. The probability is that they will not be caught or tried before the 9th March, and, anticipating this eventuality, I write now for specific instructions to guide me—

1. In the event that the Persian Government does nothing.
2. In the event that they offer 20,000 dollars more for the widow and children of Mr. Labaree.

I am preparing full transcript of the voluminous correspondence in relation to the case; but in advance of its completion I send now the essential facts, in order that the Department may instruct me in the premises before the 9th March.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) RICHMOND PEARSON.

[5889]

No. 149.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 16.)

Sir,

*Tehran, January 30, 1906.*

I HAD the honour to receive your telegram No. 9 of the 10th instant, in which you inform me that the Persian Minister in London has complained of the harsh and unusual tone of my representations regarding the condition of affairs at Shiraz.

I had the honour, in my telegram No. 12 of the 12th instant, paraphrase of which is inclosed,\* to reply to the Ala-es-Sultaneh's observations. I have little to add to that telegram, for the great length of which I must apologize.

My visit to the Grand Vizier was one of the periodical attempts which I make to get our claims settled, or at least to get some answer to my various notes. My recollection of our conversation, at which Abbas Kuli Khan acted as interpreter, is as follows:—

I began by calling attention to the deplorable state of Shiraz, and more especially of the Bushire road, where robberies of British goods are frequent, and where our Bushire Consular messengers had recently been stopped, beaten, and tied up by the feet during a whole night by the road guards who are supposed to protect travellers. I warned the Grand Vizier most seriously that British interests in Fars were endangered, and that if a period was not put to these constant outrages His Majesty's Government would be compelled to consider the question of supplying escorts to caravans carrying British goods.

His Excellency admitted that the state of Fars gave him "great pain," but added that everything was being done to put matters on a better footing. His Highness has constantly made the same remark during the last few months, and no result has followed.

I again pointed out the undesirability of keeping in office in one of the most important provinces of Persia a young Prince who had no experience in administrative work, and who was at best dependent on the advice of a Vazir who had earned the hatred of all parties at Shiraz. The Grand Vizier appeared somewhat to resent my referring to the Shua-es-Sultaneh as inexperienced, and I hastened to assure his Highness that my remarks applied to the Prince in his capacity of Governor of Fars, and that I meant no disrespect to the Shah's family. I informed his Highness that the Legation courier was leaving in two days, and I should be most obliged if he could give me, if possible next day, some definite assurance that a reform of the Government of Fars would take place at an early date. That I asked for the removal of the Shua-es-Sultaneh in twenty-four hours or made use of anything approaching a threat in case of non-compliance is simply untrue. His Highness, in reply, said he hoped to send me a satisfactory message on the subject in a few days. He has not yet done so. I then called his Highness' attention to the constant delay in answering my notes and messages. I said that it was hardly in accordance with courtesy to keep His Majesty's Legation waiting for weeks for answers to the most simple requests, and then to send replies which were often so vague that they were almost impossible to understand. His Highness said he would speak to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh with regard to the matter, and here the conversation ended, and we parted apparently on the best of terms. His Highness sent me a few days later a present of game, accompanied by a courteous note, and I subsequently had a friendly interview with him.

It is impossible to be certain, but I have a strong suspicion that the complaint made by the Ala-es-Sultaneh had not its origin either in the Mushir-ed-Dowleh or the Grand Vizier, but in the Minister of the Court, who is at present all-powerful with the Shah, and who is the paid agent in Tehran of the Shua-es-Sultaneh. It is significant that a similar complaint has recently been made in Paris of the French

Chargé d'Affaires, who has been obliged to make strong representations regarding the Prince's malpractices.

As regards the words "incapable, cruel, and tyrannical" which I used in a private letter, dated the 17th November last, to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, they are no doubt somewhat strong expressions, but I respectfully submit that they are accurate. As regards the first, I need only refer to the two telegrams already in your possession sent by the whole people of Shiraz to the Heads of Missions here, and to the condition of the roads in Fars. As regards the word "cruel," a Governor who cuts out men's tongues—and innocent men's tongues—as the Prince has done, may, I submit, be justly so characterized. Dr. Scott, lately Acting Physician at His Majesty's Legation, informs me that when at Shiraz he was constantly called in to treat some wretched creature whom the Prince had caused to be mutilated. As far as tyranny is concerned, if it is necessary to say anything more, I need only add that the Prince arbitrarily raised the rents of the Vekil Bazaar at Shiraz—a street corresponding to Regent Street in London—to such a point that hundreds of traders have suffered great losses.

As I kept no notes of my conversation with the Grand Vizier, I have shown this despatch to Abbas Kuli Khan, who was present, and he states that the account here given is substantially accurate.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

[5891]

No. 150.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 18.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 30, 1906.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 168 of the 6th ultimo, I have the honour to forward copies of despatches from His Majesty's Consul at Ispahan and His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Yezd regarding the recent agitation in the latter city against the Church Missionary Society's school. It would appear that the matter is for the present satisfactorily settled, and no further complaints have reached me.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 150.

*Vice-Consul Baggaley to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

Dear Sir,

Yezd, December 12, 1905.

I ENCLOSE a note which I have received from Dr. White for your information. I have sent the despatch to which Dr. White refers by to-day's post through Mr. Preece.

I have also sent by to-day's post to your address, under separate cover, an issue of a paper, published in Calcutta, styled "Habl-ul-Matin," containing certain articles which I have marked, and which may interest you. I am informed that this paper has a wide circulation in Persia, and generally contains undesirable matter.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) H. BAGGALEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 150.

*Dr. White to Vice-Consul Baggaley.*

Dear Mr. Baggaley,

Yezd, December 8, 1905.

WHEN you send your despatch to Tehran I should be glad, if you think fit, to express our warmest thanks to the Chargé d'Affaires for the most kind and efficient steps he took to avert what might have become a very serious outbreak here.

Yours, &c.  
(Signed) H. WHITE.

Inclosure 3 in No. 150.

*Mr. Aganoor to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 74.)

Ispahan, December 23, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith duplicate copy of a despatch (No. 16 of the 12th instant) from the Vice-Consul at Yezd on the subject of the recent agitation against the Church Missionary Society's school in that town.

Inclosure 4 in No. 150.

*Vice-Consul Baggaley to Mr. Aganoor.*

(No. 16.)

Sir,

Yezd, December 12, 1905

WITH reference to the telegraphic despatches ending with the one from me, dated the 6th instant, to His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires regarding the agitation against the Church Missionary Society's school at Yezd, I have the honour to report as follows:—

My attention was first drawn to the matter on the 22nd ultimo by my moonshee, who handed me the inclosure herewith, marked No. 1, which was copied from the original posted on the door of the musala on the evening of the 23rd ultimo. I mentioned the matter to Dr. White and Mr. Boyland, who represent the Society in Yezd, and requested the latter to keep me informed of any difficulties he might be in with regard to the school. He promised to do so, and said he had referred the matter to the Governor, who was then at Ardekan, through the Begler Begi, and expected a reply the next day. On the 25th ultimo Mr. Boyland came to see me, and stated that, although ample time had been given, no reply had been received from the Governor, and that he had no idea matters were so bad. As I had been kept well informed from various sources of everything that was going on, and realized the gravity of the situation, I advised Mr. Boyland to close the school temporarily, and dispatched my telegram to His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, a copy of which was forwarded to you.

On the 26th ultimo Hajji Mirza Agha again preached in the musala to a congregation of about 1,000, encouraging the boy, who, it transpires, is about 18 years old, to continue doing whatever mischief he could, and promising him his co-operation and support; also stating that he himself would continue preaching against and cursing the Firangis until the Moslems were set upon them. Again the next day he preached much in the same strain, and further added that the Christians had not come to Yezd to benefit the Moslems, but that they had their own purposes to serve; that the hospital was not opened for philanthropic purposes, but that it was only a cloak; that the Christians wanted to Christianize the land, and to ring church bells instead of the Mussulman calls to prayer. From this date the preaching would appear to have been discontinued, and on the 29th ultimo I was informed that the boy had been arrested.

On the 29th ultimo the Mushir-el-Mamalik came to see me, *vide* my telegram dated the 2nd instant to His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, and on the latter date I received the inclosed letter from him, marked No. 2, but I heard nothing more from him.

On the 4th instant I visited the Governor, in company with Dr. White and Mr. Boyland, at his request. He informed us that, in compliance with his orders issued from Ardekan, the boy had been severely chastised, and affected surprise when we informed him that, according to the boy's own telling, the punishment appeared to consist in his being taken to the Governor's residence, regaled with a good dinner, and promptly released. Finally the Governor promised:—

1. To have the boy seized and expelled from the town.
2. To issue a Proclamation warning people not to interfere with the school (copy of same, marked No. 3, inclosed).
3. To obtain a letter from Hajji Mirza Agha, stating that anything he is reported to have said against the Europeans or against the school is altogether a mistake, and that he does not wish to interfere in any way with either.

On the 5th instant the Governor wrote to me saying that all three terms had been carried out.

So far I have received no evidence that (1) and (3) have been carried out, but

(2) certainly has, one copy having been posted on the musala, which I think is highly satisfactory.

I think the better class of Persians in Yezd is not unfavourably disposed towards Europeans, and the lootis are not likely to do anything, unless encouraged by the mullahs. The Begler Begi has a firm hold on the former, and can be trusted to perform his duties, provided the Governor gives him the necessary orders and support. At the same time Europeans would feel more secure if more soldiers were sent to Yezd. I understand there are only about forty here at the present time, a number quite inadequate considering the population, which is roughly estimated at 60,000.

The Governor has requested me to inform His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires how well he has done for us in this matter, but I cannot conscientiously do so; particularly as he kept out of the way until presumably ordered into town by the authorities in Tehran, and did not arrive here until the 3rd instant from a place about 2 farsakhs away, where he had been for several days. Moreover, I am informed by those most competent to know that he is a very weak Governor, and that had it not been for the prompt measures taken by the Central Government, thanks to the urgent representations of His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, matters might have become very serious.

I inclose copies of three telegrams which were exchanged direct with the Legation, dated the 1st, 2nd, and 6th respectively, for your information.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) H. BAGGALEY.

Inclosure 5 in No. 150.

*Governor's Proclamation.*

(Translation.)

FOR all the people of Yezd it is proclaimed and published, because for some days, according to the desire of the honourable Consul and for certain reasons, a holiday was given in the school from teaching and instruction. Secondly, according to the permission and advice of the most learned mullahs in Yezd, we also give permission that the school be opened and they engage in teaching, and if Mussulman children also wish to gain knowledge of the language, with the permission and acquiescence of their guardians, and no one has the right to interfere with any of them. And if any (which God forbid) bring disgrace upon the honourable clergyman or his pupils certainly he shall be severely punished. Farewell.

Dated this Tuesday of the month of Shaval, 1323.

Inclosure 6 in No. 150.

*Verses composed by the boy named Ferukh Khan, which were posted on the door of the Musala at Yezd.*

(Translation.)

THE heavens are hard upon us with unsteady engagements; they have given to every mean fellow kingly pomp. Devilish ideas have stripped men of religion; they have sent their children to the house of a Nazarene. Woe unto this religion! Alas, for such a law!

O Sahib-uz-Zaman! look on the people for once, because for learning a language they have all become followers of blasphemers. They recite by heart the name of Jesus in prayer. O Imam of Land and Sea! put thy feet into the stirrup before the world goes to ruin.

They are all inclined and accustomed to Christian prayers; and yet they have no memory of their prayers as prescribed by law. Their sage is a Guebre, and their teacher an Armenian; for the sake of their lessons they have wholly given up the religion of Ahmed. May the dust be heaped on their heads for their folly!

First of all is Ali Asghar, who is the son of the Muin-ut-Tujjar, for during their prayers he says, "May evil eyes be far from here, this is the place of the Holy Ghost and not of pleasure and feasting." Then out of great ecstasy he laughs with the Nazerene, attracting his notice clandestinely.

Inclosure 7 in No. 150.

*Mushir-el-Mamalk to Vice-Consul Baggaley.*

(Translation.)

September 7, 1905.

IN reference to the discourse of that certain man, I have now been engaged up to now in negotiations and in making terms with him. He asked for a respite until this afternoon, in order to carry out the terms agreed upon. I hope to obtain a proper result after the afternoon meeting, and to inform you of the same. Let your mind be free from anxiety, because I will not grudge any exertions on my part.

[5892]

No. 151.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 19.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 30, 1906.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 2, Confidential, of the 3rd instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation of a note from the Persian Government in which they state their reasons for declining to pay the compensation demanded by His Majesty's Government in respect of the outrage on Colonel Douglas and Captain Lorimer in the autumn of 1904.

In my telegram No. 8 of the 10th instant I had the honour to inform you of the attitude of the Persian Government with regard to the matter and to express the opinion that the time has now come to enforce payment. I added that I thought diplomatic pressure would effect nothing.

From your telegram No. 11 of the 11th instant I gather that the matter is engaging the attention of His Majesty's Government and I await your instructions.

I have returned no reply to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh's note of the 6th instant.

I also inclose copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah showing that the sale of the mare and mules, referred to in my despatch No. 2, realized 1,915 krans (about 32*l.*), which has been placed to the credit of His Majesty's Legation at the Imperial Bank of Persia in Tehran.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 151.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

January 6, 1906.

I HAVE received your note of the 1st instant respecting the compensation claimed on account of the attack by the Derekvand Lurs on Colonel Douglas and Captain Lorimer. In reply, I have the honour to refer you to the previous correspondence amongst which are copies of Captain Lorimer's letter addressed to the Begler Begi and the letter written after the incident.

These copies were sent to his Excellency Sir A. Hardinge, and in my note of the 16th February, 1905, I drew his Excellency's attention to the fact that the officers in question had been informed by the local authorities of the disturbed condition of the road and that the officers in question would be responsible for any incident which might occur. The responsibility rests, therefore, with themselves, and if you will refer to the previous correspondence you will agree with me that the Persian Government has no responsibility in this matter which would necessitate the payment of any compensation.

Inclosure 2 in No. 151.

*Consul Gough to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 5.)

Sir,

Kermanshah, January 12, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram No. 16 of the 20th ultimo and to inform you that the animals were sold for the sum of 2,000 krans for the lot.

[1618]

2 L

2. The expenses of keeping the animals for seven days amounted to 45 krans, and the bank charges for sending the balance amounted to 40 krans, and the remaining sum of 1,915 krans has been sent to your credit at Tehran.

3. It is probable that I could have got a higher price for the animals, if I had waited, but considering the cost of feeding I thought it expedient to sell the animals as quickly as I could.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) H. GOUGH, Captain.

[5893]

No. 152.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 20.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 30, 1906.

IN obedience to the instructions contained in your telegram No. 1 of the 1st instant, I addressed the note, copy of which I inclose, to the Persian Government regarding the apology to be offered to His Majesty's Consul in Seistan by the local authorities on account of the burning of the buildings at Kuhak formerly occupied by the Seistan Frontier Delimitation Commission.

Captain Macpherson reported to me on the 6th instant that the Deputy Governor, accompanied by the Yamin-i-Nizam, had called on him in uniform and tendered a suitable apology, which he accepted.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 152.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

WITH regard to previous correspondence on the subject of the burning of the Kuhak buildings, I have the honour to inform you that I have received a telegram from His Majesty's Government instructing me to notify the Persian Government that they have learnt with surprise that the apology promised by the Persian Minister on the 7th ultimo has not been made. I am to say that, unless within the next few days the Deputy Governor of Seistan and the official actually guilty of burning the buildings call in uniform on His Majesty's Consul and tender a sufficient apology, the reparation offered by the Persian Government will not be accepted as a satisfactory settlement, and the whole question will have to be reopened.

I have the honour to state that I have instructed His Majesty's Consul in Seistan in the above sense.

Tehran, January 2, 1906.

[5894]

No. 153.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 21.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 30, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith two despatches from His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz, reporting on the position of affairs in that town, and generally in Fars.

The Persian Government, after disregarding for several months the petitions and telegrams sent by all classes of the community in Shiraz, at length seeing that things were becoming very serious, dispatched the Vazir-i-Makhsus to inquire into the grievances of the people. That official arrived in Shiraz on the 26th instant, and has had an interview of a cordial character with His Majesty's Consul. It remains to be seen whether or not his efforts will be attended with satisfactory results. The whole matter depends on whether the Persian Government decide to dismiss the present Governor and his Vazir, or whether they will try to force his Highness on the people. The position of affairs is now so threatening that I can hardly believe that the Grand Vizier will face

the open rebellion which is almost certain to follow any attempt to send the Shua-es-Saltaneh back to Fars.

As I reported in my telegram No. 180 of the 24th ultimo, the Mushir-ed-Dowleh sent his son to me with a message to the effect that on his arrival at Shiraz the Vazir Makhsus would assume the control of affairs, and that the present Governor-General would not return. I can only hope that it may be so, and as I had the honour to inform you in my telegram No. 29 of the 29th January, the Vazir Makhsus has promised to give the people of Shiraz a definite answer on the 3rd February next.

I would call your special attention to the complaint made to Mr. Grahame by the local representatives of British firms, who are naturally in despair at the loss of business brought about by the situation at Shiraz. Merchants at Ispahan and Bushire have been unable to forward goods owing to the prevailing insecurity, and the list of robberies of British merchandize, transmitted in my despatch No. 284 of the 31st December, 1905, is, I submit, an eloquent commentary on the Persian Minister's reassuring statement that the state of Fars has been exaggerated. It must be clearly understood that the list in question is confined to British goods stolen, and represents but a tithe of the robberies actually committed. The other southern roads are equally infested with brigands, and I have already had the honour to report on the Bakhtiari Road robberies, the responsibility for which also rests with the Governor-General of Fars.

In the above circumstances I respectfully submit that I should have grossly neglected my duty had I not repeatedly impressed on the Persian Government the necessity of properly safeguarding British interests.

I have not yet received from Mr. Grahame a full report on the outrage on the messengers of the Bushire Consulate General. I hope to have the honour of sending it by the next bag.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 153.

*Consul Grahame to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 129 M.)

Sir,

Shiraz, December 23, 1905.

IN amplification of my two telegrams Nos. 102 and 104, Secret, I have the honour to inclose a Memorandum on the situation in Fars.

I have dispatched a copy of this by the Residency Casid to-day to Bushire.

You will note that the situation tends to become acute. The leaders of the movement appear to be acting sensibly, but it is possible that they may not be able to maintain control over the malcontents.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) GEORGE GRAHAME.

Inclosure 2 in No. 153.

*Memorandum on the Situation in Fars.*

THE agitation against the Governor-General of Fars and his Vazir has now entered on a second phase. On the 18th December a telegram from Kazeroun to the Postmaster Shiraz announced troubles there.

On the 19th December the signaller of the I.E.T. Department at that station reported disturbances broken out that morning—one party for and one against the local authorities. Cause supposed over taxation on opium; others satisfied [*sic*]. Some damage done in the bazar; shops hastily closed. Current talk that disturbances put up by Khajeh, former Kalantar here.

On the 20th December Prince Moayyid-us-Saltaneh (Head of Persian Telegraph Department) communicated to the Shiraz Ulema a telegram from Tehran (apparently kept back till then) to the effect that the Salar-i-Assad was about to start as special maamur to examine grievances and to uphold the authority of the Prince Governor-General.

Apparently, on or about the same date, a "khalaat" from the Shah reached Shiraz for the Sardar.

The clergy and people, who up till then had hoped, or affected to hope, that the



Commissioner promised for examination of grievances would in reality be sent to supersede the Sardar were greatly incensed, and proceeded *en masse* to the Shah Chiragh Mosque, letting off guns *en route*. Perusal of telegrams which have passed between the Prince and some of his partisans shows that the people of Fars are fully justified in looking on the appointment of the present Commissioner as a mere mummery.

The Sardar-i-Akram from the outset of this agitation had pressed the Persian Government to send the Vazir-i-Durbar.

On the 11th December Mukarram-ud-Dowleh, the confidential agent in Tehran of the Prince, telegraphed to the Sardar to the following effect:—

"I have had great difficulty in getting the maamour changed. I have promised Abdullah (apparently the Ain-ud-Dowleh) 5,000 tomans, and chosen Salar-i-Assad, who is as good as the Vazir-i-Durbar. Send money at once."

On the 19th December the Prince from Paris telegraphed to the Sardar-i-Akram:—

"Salar-i-Assad bon choix. Altesse protégé."

On the 21st December Salar-us-Sultan sent a verbal message to Mr. Grahame through the Consulate Moonshi to say that he had resigned the office of Begler Begi, as it was out of his power to restrain the people any longer.

On the same date M. Veneziani informed Mr. Grahame that efforts were being made to force the two Rabbins of the Jewish community to join the malcontents, and requested advice. He was advised that the Rabbins and all the Jews keep entirely aloof from the movement, if necessary, feigning illness. The Rabbins have taken refuge in M. Veneziani's house.

At a small dinner-party on that evening, Mirza Reza Khan, His Imperial Highness' Chef de Chancellerie, of his own accord introduced rather *mal à propos* the subject of the recrudescence of the agitation against the Prince, who he said had no desire to impose fresh burdens on the people, and was ready to make compensation for any illegal exactions. Two or three of the guests (all Persians) cited cases of glaring extortions committed by the Prince's officials, and Mr. Grahame cited the exaction of the "rahdari" as a proof of the absolute disregard of His Imperial Highness for the rights even of powerful Governments.

There was a good deal of firing of guns between midnight and 2 A.M., apparently only for the sake of emphasizing the presence of the malcontents in the Shah Chiragh Mosque.

On the 23rd December Mirza Reza Khan sent a note urgently requesting Mr. Grahame to receive him. His visit had for object an attempt to reconcile the Consulate and the Sardar-i-Akram. Mr. Grahame pointed out that after the official communication made by His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, demanding an official apology, he must confine himself to a *role d'attente*, but he would not fail to report to the Chargé d'Affaires the wish expressed by Mirza Reza Khan that the coolness might be settled *à l'amiable*.

Mirza Reza Khan represented that this coolness was publicly known, and caused great prejudice to the Sardar in his present difficulties. His Imperial Highness would be eternally grateful if a reconciliation could be privately effected.

On the same date Haji Abdul Rahman, head of the Fars Trading Company, sent a private message to Mr. Grahame asking for advice, and stating that many of the malcontents wished to telegraph to Bushire to M. Passek (who it is rumoured is about to return to Shiraz), invoking his assistance. Others wished to telegraph to His Majesty the King.

Mr. Grahame said that, speaking privately and confidentially, he thought the people would be better advised if, after exhausting all Persian channels, they dispatched an identical telegram to all the foreign Representatives in Tehran. (Apparently up to the 23rd instant this hint had not been acted on.)

Two telegrams under this date from Qawam-ul-Mulk, and one from the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, were addressed to Salar-us-Sultan, stating that the Shah is very angry that, in spite of his promise to examine grievances, this agitation still continues, and exhorted him to use his utmost endeavours to get the Ulema and people to disperse.

On the 23rd December it appears that the above telegrams were sent by the Salar to the Shah Chiragh Mosque, but the reply was that if he offered them any more advice of that nature they would cut him to pieces.

The Consulate Moonshi brought a verbal message to Mr. Grahame from Mirza

Makim, requesting him to come himself and see what sort of men were assembled in the Shah Chiragh Mosque, and to inform Tehran.

The Moonshi had replied that he was forbidden by the Consul to carry verbal messages, and the Consul only took note of written requests.

Telegram received 2 P.M. from Kazeran reports place in same condition; occasional shots fired in the direction of Governor's place and bazaars, apparently by the men of Khajeh Abdullah, brother of the dismissed Kalantar, Khajeh Ibrahim.

It is reported that Agha Nejifi, in Ispahan, has sent a reproachful telegram to the Shah, upbraiding him for the misgovernment of Fars, and one of sympathy to the Shiraz malcontents, exhorting them to adhere to pacific means only.

Inclosure 3 in No. 153.

Consul Grahame to Mr. E. Grant Duff.

(No. 1 M. Secret.)

Sir,

Shiraz, January 3, 1906.

WITH reference to correspondence ending with my telegram No. 106 on the situation in Fars, I have the honour to inform you that matters do not appear to have changed much in the last week.

On the 1st January there were some symptoms of the agitation tending to subside. In the early morning of that day two Seyyids presented themselves here from Mirza Ibrahim Mujtehid, urgently demanding to see me.

I was at that time in bed by the doctor's orders, and was glad to avail myself of this excuse for not receiving them, but later in the day one of the leading Persian merchants called on me on a matter of business and took care to let me know that he had been charged by Mirza Ibrahim and by his own fellow-merchants to inform me that it had been resolved to prohibit the firing, which had greatly increased recently, and to devote the interval between that date and the arrival of the Vazir-i-Makhsus, who is expected to reach Shiraz about the 5th instant, to preparing detailed accounts of the extortions practised in Fars.

That evening there was a marked diminution in the firing, and yesterday morning a few shops were, I believe, opened.

I fear, however, that this can only be looked upon as a lull in the storm. I am informed that yesterday afternoon the town was again very noisy.

The Mujtehids affect to be deeply aggrieved that, in a matter in which they have certified to the facts, the Central Government should appoint any one for further investigation. It is difficult to keep abreast of the stream of lengthy telegrams recently dispatched.

Amongst them I note one from the inhabitants of Neiriz, the increase of the taxation of which place from 21,000 tomans to 45,000 tomans within the last five years I have already brought under your notice; another from Kazeroun, regarding taxation on opium.

Mirza Reza Khan continues to complain bitterly to the Prince in Paris of the weakness and procrastination of Tehran. All business is, of course, at an absolute standstill. I understand that the local Manager of the Imperial Bank has already informed the Chief Manager in Tehran of the forced inactivity of the bank here.

Messrs. Ziegler have formally complained to me in writing, on their own behalf and on that of their clients, of the detriment to trade caused by the present circumstances. Messrs. Coddington and Lamb's representative follows suit verbally. As a sample of the absolute absence of any kind of law or order, I may mention that I received this morning from the Bank Manager a complaint that last night about 7 P.M. a soldier, bearer of a telegram for the Imperial Bank from the town telegraph office, arrived at Bagh-i-Non (the garden residence of the British staff, about a mile outside the town), with the telegram torn open, complaining of having been assaulted and robbed on the way. Mr. Brown asks me "to make arrangements to insure the safety of the road leading to that garden."

I have still to examine the complaint of this soldier, who is now awaiting interrogation here.

I have, &c.

(Signed) GEORGE GRAHAME.

[5895]

No. 154.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 22.)

Sir,

*Tehran, January 31, 1906.*

WITH reference to your telegram No. 4 of the 1st instant, and previous correspondence, I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of notes which have passed between the Mushir-ed-Dowleh and myself on the subject of the action of the Vazir of Fars in causing to be beaten a muleteer who had been sent by His Majesty's Consul to the Karguzari to give evidence in a case of robbery of British-owned goods on the Bushire road.

I think the Sardar-i-Akram's action inexcusable, and as the maintenance of the principle of the immunity of witnesses sent by our Consular officer to the local authorities is most important, I earnestly hope you will see your way to insist on a proper apology being offered to Mr. Grahame.

From your telegram No. 13 of the 11th instant I understand that you are discussing the matter with the Persian Minister in London, and await your further instructions before replying to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh's note of the 11th instant.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 154.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.**December 31, 1905.*

I HAVE received your note of the 23rd instant stating that the Tufang-chies on the Bushire-Shiraz road have beaten two messengers carrying Consular bags.\* I have made inquiries by telegraph on the subject and will communicate to you any answer which I may receive.

With regard to the punishment of the muleteer whom you state had been sent by the British Consul, it does not appear from reports received that the man had been sent by the Consul direct to the Sardar-i-Akram, but that he was sent by the Foreign Office agent. I will make inquiries, and if it is proved that the man was sent direct by Mr. Grahame to the Sardar, and that the Sardar punished him at once, I will censure the Sardar, because courtesy to the Consulate is necessary, but he cannot be forced to apologize to the Consul for having justly punished a Persian subject who was in the wrong.

With regard to the disorder in Fars, the necessary steps have been taken, and, as you are aware, the Vazir Makhsus, who is one of the high officials of the Persian Government, has left for that province with efficient instructions for the restoration of order, and he will soon arrive at his destination for the perfect readministration of the place.

Inclosure 2 in No. 154.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.**Tehran, January 2, 1906.*

WITH reference to your Excellency's note of the 31st ultimo, stating that the Persian Government declined to order the Deputy Governor of Shiraz, Sardar-i-Akram, to tender an apology to His Majesty's Consul at that town for his action in causing to be beaten a muleteer sent to the Karguzari to give evidence in a case of robbery of British-owned goods. I have the honour to inform you that I duly drew the attention of His Majesty's Government to the matter. I have repeatedly, as your Excellency is well aware, brought to your notice the marked disregard of British interests shown by the Shua-es-Sultaneh and by the Sardar-i-Akram during the last year, and I can hardly believe that the Persian Government has carefully considered the exact bearings of the present case. The muleteer was sent by the Consulate of a friendly foreign Power to

\* Report on this case not yet received from Shiraz.

give evidence in a matter in which that Power was directly interested. Without reference to the Consulate he was seized and beaten by the order of the chief civil authority of the province. Your Excellency's argument that he was not sent direct to the Governor is surely irrelevant. The channel of communication of His Majesty's Consulate with the local authorities is the Karguzari, and thither he was duly sent. He was then beaten by order of the Deputy Governor, who is therefore directly responsible for an act gravely affecting the respect due to His Majesty's Consul. If the Shiraz authorities considered the muleteer guilty of any offence against the law it was their duty, after taking his evidence in the case affecting British interests, to have so apprised Mr. Grahame, with a request for the man's attendance at the Karguzari.

I am now instructed by His Majesty's Government formally to demand that the Sardar-i-Akram proceed to His Majesty's Consulate and there offer a proper and sufficient apology for his disrespectful behaviour.

As this matter has already been long delayed I request your Excellency to furnish me at an early date with the reply of the Persian Government, which I will at once communicate by telegram to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Inclosure 3 in No. 154.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.**January 11, 1906.*

IN continuation of my reply dated the 14th ultimo, respecting the punishment of the muleteer, and the complaints made by the British Consul at Shiraz, I have the honour to state that in reply to my telegram the Sardar-i-Akram has telegraphed stating that the muleteer was not sent to him by the Consul, and when the muleteer came to him he stated that, while asleep about three stages from the town, two bales of goods belonging to foreign merchants were robbed from him. The muleteer reported the robbery to the Sardar thirty days after the occurrence. For the above reasons the Sardar punished the muleteer in order to be a lesson to others, and not to cause damage to other people's goods.

If on this occasion the muleteer had not been punished would not other muleteers be encouraged to make difficulties in the future? In order to prevent defalcation and assist the Consulate in the matter the Governor has been obliged to punish the man. Instead of making complaints the Consul should be grateful for the steps taken by the authorities.

[5896]

No. 155.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 23. Confidential.)

Sir,

*Tehran, January 30, 1906.*

AS I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 21 of the 14th instant, the mollahs who had been for some time in "bast" at Shah Abdul Azim, a shrine 6 miles away, returned on the 13th January to Tehran. The principal Mujtehid, Agha Seyyid Abdullah, occupied one of the Shah's carriages drawn by six horses; several of the other important mollahs were also conveyed in Court carriages. The minor ulema and religious students travelled in eighty carriages hired for the purpose by the Government, while Persia's only railway ran special trains for the large number of hangers-on and followers of the great Mujtehids.

The following concessions have been made to the demands of the mollahs:—

1. A Representative Assembly, the composition of which is being discussed, will be established, not only in Tehran, but in all the principal towns of Persia. Both the Grand Vizier and the Mushir-ed-Dowleh are very reticent regarding these Assemblies, but they admit that the formation of such bodies is being considered. From other fairly reliable sources I hear that they will be composed of Government officials, mollahs, and merchants. Should this statement be accurate it is hardly necessary to say that the mollahs will have the prevailing voice.

2. Twelve and a-half per cent. was formerly subtracted from the salaries of all officials, and 5 per cent. of this has now been remitted.

3. The Government undertake to return to the ulema of Tehran the endowment of a certain college here which was recently confiscated.

4. Certain changes are to be made in the Customs Administration. It is not yet quite clear what these are to be, but it is certain that the number of Armenians employed in responsible positions will be much reduced, if their services are not altogether dispensed with.

5. The Ala-ed-Dowleh, Governor of Tehran, has been forced to resign. His Excellency recently incurred the displeasure of the ulema for beating some grocers who declined to lower the price of sugar (see my telegram No. 173 of the 13th ultimo). It will be remembered that the Ala-ed-Dowleh was the Persian official selected to receive Lord Curzon at Bushire in 1903. He is a Kajar, and one of the few relatively capable Persian officials I have met. His retirement is a significant sign of the power of the mollahs and the weakness of the Persian Government. He has been succeeded by the Nayer-ed-Dowleh, also a Kajar Prince, and formerly Governor-General of Khorassan.

6. The Zafir-es-Saltaneh to be dismissed from the Governor-Generalship of Kerman for beating a turbulent mollah.

The dismissal of M. Naus, which was also demanded, has, it is stated, not been granted by the Shah.

It remains to be seen how far the Persian Government will carry out the promises made to the mollahs, especially as regards the Assemblies. The attitude of the clergy is at present one of expectancy, but there is every sign that they mean business, and, like all classes here, are heartily sick of the utter ineptitude of the Shah and his courtiers. It is also certain that the mollahs are secretly supported by many of the more respectable Persian officials of high rank.

The town is at present quiet, but there is considerable latent excitement, which the month of Moharram and the desperate financial position may call into life.

I wish again to make it quite clear that I do not think there is any general bad feeling against Europeans in Persia. Against the Armenians there certainly is hostility, and the Mussulman refugees from the Caucasus, who have arrived in great numbers at Tabreez and Resht with the wildest stories of their sufferings, have for some months been threatening reprisals. The excitement reported to exist at Tabreez will, no doubt, tend to subside if order is restored in Russia, but I should never be surprised to hear of an Armenian massacre in that town.

One circumstance has lately struck me as significant. The Valiahd and the Governor-General of Khorassan have each more than once endeavoured to obtain news from me as to the state of Tehran. I have instructed His Majesty's Consuls-General to return very cautious answers.

There is no doubt that all over Persia there is a feeling of unrest, while in Fars, Luristan, and Kurdistan there is a state of almost open rebellion. This, combined with a financial state bordering on bankruptcy, makes it not improbable that Persia is on the eve of a change; but what form this will take, and when exactly the end of the present form of government will occur, it is at present impossible to say.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

[5897]

No. 156.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 24.)  
Sir,

*Tehran, January 31, 1906.*

WITH reference to my immediately preceding despatch on the subject of certain concessions forced on the Persian Government by the Ulema of Tehran, I have the honour to transmit herewith a summary, drawn up by Abbas Kuli Khan, of the Petition sent to the Shah from Shah Abdul Azim by the Mollahs of Tehran.

The Petition was received by the Shah, but it remains to be seen whether the reforms demanded will be introduced. It is a remarkably eloquent and sensible document, and it is to be hoped it will bear fruit. As it is very lengthy, I have thought it sufficient to send you the substance, and not a full translation.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 156.

*Summary of Petition sent to the Shah by the Mollahs of Tehran, from Shah Abdul Azim.*

DURING the recent riot at Tehran, the clergy who were at Shah Abdul Azim, 6 miles from the capital, submitted a Petition to the Shah. They refer in that Petition to the loyalty of their ancestors to the Sefavi Sovereigns of Persia and Nadir Shah, and the conquests made under the latter. They say that, although during the last century they have been subject to all sorts of cruelties and oppression, they have still the same respect for the Shah as their ancestors had for the former Kings, and that they have not risen like other nations against their Sovereign to put an end to their sufferings, but they are obliged, as they cannot bear the cruelties any longer, to lay their grievances before His Majesty. They state:—

“Your Majesty! Have mercy on us! We are your subjects. We have been suffering for a whole century from all sorts of cruelties and oppression. Our lives, property, and rights are unprotected. Our country is in a state of anarchy. Our property is plundered and we ourselves are enslaved by tyrants who mutilate any of us they please, and charge taxes a thousand times more than what is due. By means of the wealth thus accumulated they conspire with your Majesty's entourage and prevent our Petitions from reaching the Throne, and when we insist they call us rebels, and instead of obtaining justice we are punished.

“Not only are we treated worse than beasts in other countries, but all our national rights have been sold to foreigners, and we have to bear the burden of a large loan with high interest, while not a penny of the money thus borrowed has been spent on the country, the inhabitants of which are obliged to emigrate to other countries on account of poverty, which is the result of oppression. The financial and military position of the country is in such a bad state that in case of an attack by a foreign Power it will be impossible for the Persians to defend their country, and therefore it is the duty of them to remedy the evil by introducing the following system:—

“Article 1. All men shall be equal in the eyes of the law.

“Art. 2. The law should be based on the Mohammedan law with modifications and alterations so as to suit the requirements of the time. The law should be in Persian and drawn up by a Legislative Body.

“Art. 3. The law should be called after the Shah's name, the ‘Muzafferin Law.’

“Art. 4. Any Persian who refuses to accept it should be punished with death.

“Arts. 5 and 6. The Legislative Body should be elected by the people and the laws enacted by a majority.

“Art. 7. All members of the Legislative Body should receive fixed and moderate salaries.

“Art. 8. The object of the Council in question will be to protect the rights, lives, property, and honour of the people.

“Art. 9 refers to freedom of speech in the Council, but any person who should say anything against the Shah's person should be punished with death.

“Art. 10. No person shall have superior rank unless it be so ordained by the Council.

“Art. 11. Everybody will be free, as long as his action does not interfere with other people.

“Art. 12. The Council shall prevent such deeds as would be injurious to the people.

“Art. 13. All men should be allowed to give their opinions before the Council.

“Art. 14. The proceedings of the Council should be published in a special journal.

“Art. 15. All men shall have the right of being raised to any office in return for the services rendered by them to the State, but it should be in proportion to the services rendered.

“Art. 16. No man should be punished without trial.

“Art. 17. All punishments must be inserted in a code of law.

“Art. 18. No Government official shall attempt to protect any guilty person or any man charged with any offence against the law.

“Art. 19. No man shall be punished for expressing his thoughts and beliefs, unless they be contrary to the law.

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"Art. 20. Speech and the press shall be free, unless anyone attempts to say or publish anything against the law.

"Arts. 21 and 22. Taxes are to be paid equally by every man, but must not be levied by force or in excess.

"Art. 23. The budget shall be open to the public for examination.

"Art. 24. The army must be reorganized."

At the end of the Petition the clergy refer to the deplorable condition of the finances of the country, and they state that the Shah's entourage have squandered the ancient treasures of Persia and robbed the State of all the jewels and precious articles brought from India by the Persians in the days of their glory, and all the money of the loans raised in foreign countries has been spent by the Shah in Europe during His Majesty's visits to that continent without modern civilization being introduced by him into his country. The clergy further states that the public will no longer bear the oppression of the authorities, and will be obliged to change the present Government, and therefore it is better that it should be done by the Shah himself, in order that he may leave an eternal name to his posterity.

[5898]

No. 157.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 25.)

Sir,

*Tehran, January 31, 1906.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 3 of the 3rd instant, I have the honour to inclose a translation of a note from the Persian Government relative to the alleged encroachment by the Ottoman troops at Vazneh and in Lahijan.

In his note, Mushir-ed-Dowleh states that the Persian Government expect Great Britain to assist them in restoring these districts to their former condition, in order that a joint inquiry may be held.

I have returned no answer to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh's note, but I verbally informed his Excellency that I would send it to you by the first opportunity. At a recent interview with the Grand Vizier, his Highness spoke to me about the frontier dispute and expressed rather bellicose intentions should the Turkish Government decline to withdraw their troops. I informed his Highness that the frontier question was one that only concerned me in so far as the Persian Government had asked for the assistance of His Majesty's Government to settle the dispute, but that, speaking as a friend and quite unofficially, I strongly recommended him to consider the consequences of any attempt to drive out the Turkish troops. His Highness replied that Persian soldiers had in past times shown that they could defeat Turkish armies. To this I answered that I did not wish to make any reflection on the bravery of the Persian soldier, but that I doubted the wisdom of an appeal to arms, especially in a matter which, I thought, could be settled in a peaceable manner.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 157.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(Translation.)

*January 23, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 28th ultimo, respecting the concurrence of Sir E. Grey in the opinion expressed by Sir N. O'Connor, the British Ambassador in Constantinople, that the Persian Government should accept a Joint Commission and an inquiry into the matter before the withdrawal of the Turkish troops from the district of Lahijan and Vazneh, the proofs of the ownership of which by the Persian Government have been impressed on you both verbally and in writing.

In reply, I have to state that, in view of the long possession by Persia of the district in question, and of the note addressed by the British and Russian Commissioners to Dervish Pasha, the Turkish Commissioner, on the 21st July, 1854, preventing him from summoning the Vali of Ravandum to the district above mentioned, and the express admission by them of its being in Persian possession, the Persian Government, apart from the friendship existing between our two respective Governments, did not think it

probable that the British Government would consider the proposal made by the Turks a reasonable one.

As it does not appear that a joint inquiry would lead to a satisfactory result while the Turks are engaged in encroaching on the district, the Persian Government expects that of Great Britain to assist her, in accordance with the obligations of that Government as Arbitrator in the frontier disputes between Persia and Turkey, in restoring the district to its former condition by its return to Persia, in order that the joint inquiry may be properly made and no injustice done.

[5901]

No. 158.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 28.)

Sir,

*Tehran, February 1, 1906.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 25 of the 31st ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a report which has been addressed to me by Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas, Military Attaché to this Legation, estimating the number of troops that Persia could place on the frontier in the event of an outbreak of hostilities with Turkey.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 158.

*Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 8.)

Sir,

*Tehran, January 31, 1906.*

IN his despatch No. 68 of the 14th December, 1905, the Military Attaché to His Majesty's Embassy at Constantinople has given the number of Turkish troops available in case of a collision on the Turco-Persian frontier. I have now the honour to submit the following estimate of the number of Persian troops which could be opposed to them.

According to the official redistribution of commands which was made last year, the numbers available should be as follows:—

	Infantry.		Cavalry.	
	Battalions.	Strength.	Squadrons.	Strength.
1. At Khoi, Urmi, and other places on the Turkish frontier—				
Mahid Sadik Khan's Command ..	6	5,333	5	581
2. In other parts of Azerbaijan—				
Zaffer-ed-Dauleh's Command ..	5	3,943	7	1,131
Amir Nizam's Command ..	10	9,512	4	574
3. In Kurdistan and Khamsel—				
Ala-ed-Dauleh's Command ..	5	4,218	4	1,261
4. In Kermanshah, Hamadan, and neighbourhood—				
Hissam-ul-Mulk's Command ..	6	4,849	5	417
5. In Luristan and Arabistan—				
Zaffer-es-Sultaneh's Command ..	6	4,733	8	985
Total ..	38	32,588	33	4,949

It is impossible to say at what strength the infantry battalions are maintained under ordinary circumstances, but it is safe to assume that not more than half the above number are actually under arms, and in case of battalions being called out, the ranks would be filled up with a collection of men of all ages, impressed from the villages and absolutely without training of any sort. The cavalry are found by the tribes, and could be called out in case of necessity.

As regards artillery, each of the above commands has on its strength a few hundred artillerymen, but the total number of guns in the Western Provinces does not,



I believe, exceed thirty, old Uchatius guns of calibre varying from 7 centim. to 9 centim.

The antiquated weapons with which the infantry are armed are quite useless against modern rifles; their supply of ammunition is probably limited to a few rounds per man; they have no staff, no training, no arrangements for transport or supply, or for any of the numerous departments required by an army in the field, and no money to supply any of these things.

It is therefore evident that Persia is not in a position to offer any opposition worthy of the name to the well-equipped body of troops which Turkey could place on the frontier and that any attempt at resistance must end in disaster.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. A. DOUGLAS, *Lieutenant-Colonel,  
Military Attaché.*

[5902]

No. 159.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 29.)

Sir,

*Tehran, February 1, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a despatch from the Government of India, received by me in November 1905, regarding the British post-offices in the Persian Gulf.

As I reported in my telegram No. 17, Lord Lansdowne's despatch No. 85 of the 17th June, 1905, was, by Sir A. Hardinge's instructions, handed by me in original to M. Naus in July 1905, and since then, in spite of many applications, I have been unable to get a definite reply from the Customs Department. Before leaving here in October 1905, M. Naus verbally informed me that he had been so heavily engaged that he had had no time seriously to study the question, but he said that, personally, he saw no objection to an agreement regarding the parcel post on the lines proposed by Lord Lansdowne. He added that he would discuss the matter fully with me on his return to Tehran in January.

I waited before sending you the inclosed despatch till I could receive a definite answer, but M. Naus shows no sign of returning to Persia. The Administrator of Customs has now telegraphed to his Excellency, and has promised me an answer in a few days.

On the 19th January the Government of India telegraphed for my views, and I replied that I concurred in the opinion that, although the postal rights claimed for our post-offices in the Persian Gulf are somewhat anomalous when judged by the rules of the Postal Union, these post-offices occupy a privileged position which ought not to be judged by, or made to conform with, the rules observed by other nations. I added that I thought the negotiations should be limited to an agreement in regard to the parcel post.

M. Naus will attend the Postal Conference at Rome, and although he appeared personally ready to come to an agreement, it is possible that the Persian Government, who resent the fact that we have post-offices in the Persian Gulf, may have given him instructions to raise the question of their existence.

I understand that Lord Lansdowne's instructions refer only to the parcel post, and that no Postal Convention is contemplated by His Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 159.

*Government of India to Sir A. Hardinge.*

(Confidential.)

Sir,

*Simla, September 19, 1905.*

1 AM directed to invite attention to the correspondence ending with your despatch dated the 19th May, 1905, regarding the British post-offices in the Persian Gulf.

2. On the 8th June, 1905, the Secretary of State for India telegraphed that you were being authorized to conclude, in consultation with the Government of India, an

arrangement with the Persian Government on the lines of the procedure which is observed at Constantinople in regard to parcel mails from the United Kingdom. But in your despatch of the 19th May, 1905 (above quoted), it is stated that M. Naus desires to conclude a Postal Convention with the Government of India, and would like a representative of the Indian Post Office to be sent to negotiate or assist in the negotiation of it.

3. Before coming to a decision on M. Naus' suggestion, the Government of India desire that the following considerations be laid before you:—

4. They fully realize that the postal rights claimed for the British post-offices in the Persian Gulf (which question would presumably come within the scope of such a general Postal Convention as is suggested) are somewhat anomalous when judged by the rules of the Postal Union. But, at the same time, their contention is that, for historical reasons, these post-offices occupy a privileged position which ought not to be judged by, or made to conform to, the rules observed by other nations. That this is also your view is deduced from the terms of your telegram dated the 15th February, 1905.

5. In these circumstances, it is arguable that the Government of India would be gratuitously abandoning their present advantageous position if their rights were to be formulated in a Postal Convention as desired by M. Naus, and it would appear to be more consistent with Indian interests to limit the negotiation to the conclusion of an arrangement with the Persian Government in regard to parcel mails only. By adopting this course not only would embarrassing questions be avoided as to the legitimate character of the rights claimed by the British post-offices, but His Majesty's Legation might be able to carry on negotiations without the assistance of an Indian official, doubtful points not elucidated by the information received from Constantinople being referred to the Government of India for advice. The Government of India would be glad to be favoured with your opinion on this point.

6. Should you, after consideration of these points, hold that the conclusion of a general postal arrangement is still desirable, the question of the deputation of an Indian official to Tehran would have to be considered. The question is one of some difficulty, since the only officers of the Indian Postal Department who possess the requisite qualifications for duty of this kind are not available. I am therefore to request your views on the following alternative suggestions as to the measures that might be taken:—

(a.) Matters might stand over at present, and the opportunity of the International Postal Congress next year might be taken to arrange for an informal discussion of the postal questions involved between M. Naus and the representatives of the Indian Post Office. This would enable us to ascertain what M. Naus's views really are, and would clear the way for the drawing up of a Convention on lines which could be laid down by Government after receiving the report of our postal delegates. If this suggestion should be accepted, then it could no doubt be arranged that the *status quo* should be maintained until the new Convention or Agreement is entered into.

(b.) If, on the other hand, you should consider it desirable, for political reasons, to enter into negotiations at once, the difficulty as to the selection of a postal officer might be overcome by an officer of the Indian Political Department being deputed to Tehran to negotiate, or assist in the negotiation of, a Convention, after having received a course of instruction from the Indian Postal Department in all necessary points. In view of the large political element that enters into the present question, it might even be held that the Government of India would be more suitably represented by a political than a postal official. In that case, it might be useful to obtain a preliminary assurance from M. Naus in writing to the effect that the proposed negotiation would be conducted on the basis of the continuation of the rights at present claimed for the British post-offices in Persia.

These alternatives are submitted for your consideration and advice; but the Government of India do not conceal the reluctance with which they would approach any negotiations that might conceivably result in the curtailment or abrogation of privileges which they at present enjoy.

I have, &c.

(Signed) S. M. FRASER,  
*Officiating Secretary to the Government of India.*

[5904]

No. 160.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 31.)

Sir,

*Tehran, February 1, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the usual monthly summary of events in Persia, which have not been recorded in separate despatches.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 160.

*Monthly Summary of Events in Persia, February 1, 1906.**Meshed.*

M. LE KLEMM, at present Russian Consul-General at Bombay, has been appointed to succeed M. Mousnikow at Meshed.

2. In spite of the official denial by the Prime Minister of the report that the Meshed-Ashkabad road has been sold to Russia, Major Sykes continues to assert that it is a *fait accompli*, and is an open secret in Meshed. According to his information the bank has advanced the Reis-ut-Tujjar 100,000 tomans on the transaction, and is prepared to spend 60,000 tomans in repairs. It is also reported that a metalled road is to be made between Meshed and Tehran, and that the visit of the Muavin-ut-Tujjar to the capital is in connection with this scheme. Mr. Grant-Duff has arranged to see the Muavin at an early date.

3. Our Consul-General, having lately presented a cheap clock to the Shrine at Meshed, now reports that this ornament has been placed in the most honourable position possible, close to the head of the tomb of the Imam Reza. The political effect of this is, Major Sykes thinks, remarkably good.

4. The Japanese who passed through Tehran at the beginning of December arrived in Meshed on the 7th January, and is said to have excited much interest there. He is anxious to go to India through Afghanistan. His name is Tei Suzuki, and he is a lieutenant in the Reserve and also a Buddhist priest.

5. The Russian Bank in Meshed has lately made a new gate in the city wall leading to their premises. An inscription which was put on this gate, to the effect that it was built "in the time of Dmetrieff, the Chief Manager, under the supervision of the engineer Yazikoff, by the Muavin-i-Sanaa," has roused considerable feeling among the people of Meshed, and M. Dmetrieff was forced to remove it. The matter has been reported to Tehran, and Major Sykes thinks that it may cause further trouble to the Russians.

*Seistan.*

1. The Itisham-ul-Wazareh arrived in Seistan on the 6th December. He is apparently charged with a commission to investigate certain accusations which have been brought against the Yamin-i-Nizam of betrayal of Persian interests to the British, interference in the affairs of the local Government, and also to inspect and report on the boundary as recently demarcated by Colonel McMahon. It is said that in his tour of inspection of the boundary pillars he will be accompanied by a Representative of the Russian Consulate. Captain Macpherson has been informed that the Afghan Governor has received instructions from the Ameer that, should the Itisham-ul-Wazareh during his visit to the frontier ask for an interview, he is to be received with scant courtesy, and that any attempt to destroy the pillars is to be resisted by force.

2. The Russian constructors who have been repairing the Meshed-Seistan telegraph line, after completing the repairs to a point a little south of Birjand, ceased work and returned to their stations. The severity of the weather was the reason they gave for not continuing the work.

3. Two new British signallers for Birjand and Turbat-i-Haidari arrived in Seistan on the 6th December. Application for permission for them to have access to the telegraph-offices at these places has been made.

4. M. Ovseenko, who is now on his way from Meshed to take up his post as Russian Consul at Bunder Abbas, arrived in Seistan on the 28th December. He was given a similar reception to that accorded to M. Nekrassof on his arrival (*v. summary for last month*).

5. Owing to heavy rains the Helmund has been in high flood, and on the 20th December the dam at Kuhak was carried away. Considerable damage has also been done to the crops in the neighbourhood.

6. The Persian Customs official at Yagdan, near Birjand, was murdered last month by Afghan camelmen, from whom he had taken some opium which they were trying to smuggle into Persia. The Persian Government has asked His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires to take steps for the arrest of the murderers. The matter is being investigated.

*Shiraz.*

The condition of Fars continues to be extremely unsatisfactory, and constant reports of robberies on the Bushire road are received. In the town of Shiraz petty aggressions are frequent, and the soldiers take advantage of the disturbed conditions to hold up and blackmail persons going about after dark. Shops are closed and business entirely suspended. At Kazeroun also there have been further disturbances, shops in the bazaars have been attacked and looted, and the Governor's quarters were fired on.

Mr. Grahame considers that the most serious features in the present situation are, firstly, the apparently increasing unrest in outlying districts, and, secondly, the propagation among the people of rumours as to the disturbed condition of other parts of Persia. News of the revolutionary movement in Russia and of the massacre of Mussulmans in the Caucasus tend still further to excite the feelings of the people.

*Ispahan.*

The Shiraz merchants have telegraphed to Ispahan asking that, owing to the state of Fars, goods should not be forwarded at present, and Agha Nejefi, the well-known priest, has, it is said, taken the matter up, and telegraphed to the Prime Minister asking him to listen to the complaints of the Shirazis and to change the Governor.

The Russian Commercial Agent, Prince Amatooni, is said to have met with little success in his endeavours to induce the Ispahan merchants to deal more largely in Russian goods. He afterwards went on to Yezd.

*Kerman.*

His Highness the Firman Firma, at present Governor of Kermanshah, has been appointed Governor of Kerman.

*Ahwaz.*

1. His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz mentions a report that some Lurs from the neighbourhood of Burujird had been sent down to punish the Direkvend tribe, and that some fighting had taken place, but without any definite result. The Lagvend Chief, Khanjan Khan, who resides near Dizful in the winter, and is paid to protect the inhabitants of the town and the neighbourhood against raids, has been trying to form an alliance among all the Lur tribes to resist any attack on them by the Persian Government. A deputation was sent to the Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh to endeavour to obtain his co-operation.

2. The embargo on the export of wheat still continues, and Messrs. Lynch's agent at Ahwaz has been unsuccessful in his efforts to induce the Governor to withdraw it.

3. In connection with the D'Arcy Oil Syndicate, a Mr. Bertie, with two assistants and a quantity of plant, arrived at Ahwaz in December. Before work can be commenced a road will have to be made to the oil-fields, as some of the machinery is so heavy that wheeled transport will be necessary to carry it.

4. In October last His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople reported that the Russian Steam Navigation Company were sending a ship called the "Vesta" to the

Persian Gulf. This vessel passed Mohammerah on the way to Bussorah on the 15th November, and on her return, ten days later, landed a few bales of cotton goods and shipped a small quantity of tobacco for Beyrout and Constantinople.

#### Tabreez.

1. On the Czar's name-day there was a distribution of Russian decorations to the Karguzar and the whole of the Valiahd's entourage, including the Farrash-bashi. Mr. Wratislaw thinks that this was a reward for work done, and that the Russians have obtained from the Prince promises of many advantages when he becomes Shah. Meanwhile His Imperial Highness continues to buy up villages in the neighbourhood of Tabreez, and it is stated on good authority that he intends to send his second son to study in Russia and to make him a Russian subject; and, further, that in the event of trouble in Persia, he himself would not hesitate to take Russian nationality.

2. The Russian employes on the Julfa-Tabreez road went on strike last month, owing to a disagreement with the authorities about their pay; and the clerks of the Russian Bank refused to go into some new houses which had been built for them some distance outside the town unless the Bank provided each of them with a carriage.

3. In connection with the frontier dispute, a regiment from Khoi was expected at Urmi early in the year, on their way to Ushnu, on which town the Turks were supposed to have designs.

4. Large numbers of Mussulman refugees from Russian territories have lately been arriving at Tabreez, and have been circulating exaggerated reports about the massacre of their co-religionists by Armenians. His Majesty's Consul-General thinks that this may lead to trouble, and the Armenian community are much alarmed.

#### Resht.

The conditions of trade generally in Ghilan continue to be most unfavourable, amounting practically to a total stagnation of business. This is due to the state of Russia, on which country the commerce of Ghilan is entirely dependent.

The Prince-Governor has been suddenly called to Tehran, and leaves on the 1st February.

#### Bunder Abbas.

Temporary telegraphic communication between Bunder Abbas and Henjan was opened on the 13th January. It being, however, found that the provisional position of the cable was too close to the sea, the Superintendent received orders from his Department to shift it further inland, and obtained permission from the British Consul to use the extreme corner of the new site which has been procured for the Consulate, which is directly opposite to the spot where the cable is landed. In spite of this being fully explained, on the 23rd January the Deputy-Governor and Foreign Office Agent stopped the work and imprisoned the workmen, placing an armed guard over the cable-house and practically making the Superintendent a prisoner, and it was only after repeated protests that the cable was enabled to be used in the evening. Meanwhile work in the cable-house has been stopped. The Mushir-ed-Dowleh was addressed on the subject and promised to make inquiries. Meanwhile the Director of the Persian Telegraphs at Bushire has been sent to Bunder Abbas to investigate the case.

#### SUBJECTS dealt with in separate Despatches.

Subjects dealt with.	No. and Date of Despatch.
Grand Vizer's inquiry as to policy of new Government ..	No. 6, January 5, 1906.
Bakhtiari Road .. .. .	No. 8, January 18, 1906.
King's birthday and Kuhak incidents .. .. .	No. 10, January 27; No. 20, January 30, 1906; No. 6, Telegraphic.
Bahreinis .. .. .	No. 11, January 27, 1906; No. 24, Telegraphic.
Persian loan .. .. .	No. 12, January 27, 1906; Nos. 5 and 32, Telegraphic.
Trial of Kurds at Urmi .. .. .	Nos. 14 and 15, January 29, 1906; No. 28, Telegraphic.
Silk trade regulations .. .. .	No. 2, Commercial, January 29, 1906.
Persian Government's complaints against His Majesty's Representatives .. .. .	No. 16, January 30, 1906; No. 12, Telegraphic.
Anti-Christian agitation at Yezd .. .. .	No. 18, January 30, 1906.
Douglas Lorimer outrage .. .. .	No. 19, January 30, 1906; Nos. 8 and 14, Telegraphic.
Condition of Fars .. .. .	Nos. 21 and 22, January 30, 1906; Nos. 7, 19, 22, 25, 29, 31, Telegraphic.
Tehran anti-Government agitation .. .. .	Nos. 23 and 24, January 30, 1906; No. 21, Telegraphic.
Embargoes .. .. .	No. 5, Commercial, February 1, 1906; No. 1, Commercial, Telegraphic.
D'Arcy Petroleum Concession .. .. .	No. 27, January 31, 1906; Nos. 16 and 26, Telegraphic.
Turco-Persian frontier dispute .. .. .	No. 25, January 31; No. 28, February 1, 1906.
Plague in Seistan .. .. .	Nos. 13, 18, 20, 23, 27, Telegraphic.

#### Tehran.

1. The Shah, whose health continues relatively good, has been away for some time at Jajrud, a shooting-box about 15 miles off. His Majesty probably returns on the 2nd February.

2. On the day the mollahs returned from Shah Abdul Azim the bazaars were brilliantly illuminated and the shopkeepers supplied tea and food to all comers. The Imam Jume'h, who has given great offence by siding with the Government against the other mollahs, has formed the subject of many libellous poems, and insulting notices have been posted on his house. It is stated on good authority that his position has become so unpleasant that he is going to Khorassan.

3. The Zil-es-Sultan, who has been in Europe, has returned, and arrived here on the 31st January. His eldest son, the Jallal-ed-Dowleh, has been appointed Governor of Kurdistan, and will proceed thither shortly.

4. M. Grube, Head of the Russian Bank, states that he is going to Russia in the spring and will not return to Persia. He says that he has been promised an official post in Russia and has accepted it.

(Signed) J. A. DOUGLAS, Lieutenant-Colonel,  
Military Attaché.

[5905]

No. 161.

Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 32.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 1, 1906.

ON the 13th ultimo I had the honour to report by telegram that the existence of plague of a virulent type in Seistan was confirmed.

I inclose a copy of a letter addressed to the President of the Sanitary Council by the Customs Department, showing the villages infected by the disease and the number of deaths already recorded.

Plague, both in bubonic and pneumonic form, would appear to be present, but recent reports give the death-rate at not more than three a-day, although between

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100 to 200 persons seem to have succumbed before the disease was discovered, and no doubt, as is always the case in Persia, some deaths are concealed.

In some quarters it is doubted whether the complaint is true plague at all. There is said to be a disease peculiar to the marshy lands of Seistan which is apt to break out when the water is low, and which the inhabitants attribute to the diet of the local fowlers, who are stated to live exclusively on birds. On the other hand, the hospital assistant attached to His Majesty's Consulate in Seistan, who has had three years' plague experience, states positively that it is true plague, in both the bubonic and pneumonic forms. In any case, it is certain that the existing disease is highly infectious and fatal. It seems principally confined to one tribe; a second tribe, which intermarries with the first, also suffers, while other tribes inhabiting similar country and subject to the same influence escape, or are little affected.

The quarantine arrangements are under the nominal chief control of Ehtisham-ul-Vezareh, the frontier officer in Seistan, but are really under M. Molitor, Director of Customs, assisted by the British Indian doctor of His Majesty's Consulate, the doctor of the Russian Consulate, and a Persian doctor. Dr. Abbas Ali has been dispatched to Bandan, and a Russian doctor to Lab-i-Behring. I have arranged for Dr. Clemenger, the Indo-European Telegraph Department doctor stationed at Nasratabad Sipeh, to be transferred for service under the Government of India as Plague Officer. I understand that a British Indian medical assistant has been sent to Kuh-i-Malek Siah, and that steps are being taken by the Government of India to dispatch further medical aid to Nasratabad.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 161.

*Dr. Schneider to Dr. Odling.*

*Téhéran, le 24 Janvier, 1906.*

Je vous adresse ci-jointe la copie d'une lettre que je viens de recevoir du Ministère des Douanes, et qui donne des renseignements assez détaillés sur les villages de Seistan, atteints par la peste, ainsi que sur la date de son apparition et la mortalité.

Inclosure 2 in No. 161.

*Persian Customs to Dr. Schneider.*

M. le Président,

*Téhéran, le 22 Janvier, 1906.*

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître qu'actuellement toute la partie du Neizar située à l'ouest de Nasratabad et Seistan est infectée; pour toute la région on constate une moyenne de 5 à 10 décès par jour.

Je donne ci-après la situation constatée officiellement par les membres de la Commission Sanitaire: Deh Issa, infecté depuis 8 jours, 4 morts; Dadeh, depuis 15 jours, 9 morts; Sente-houri, depuis 15 jours, 5 morts; Deh Ali Ekber, depuis 1 mois, 25 morts; Zemel Chah Begh, depuis 15 jours, 55 morts; Charneri, depuis 20 jours, 12 morts; Akberabad, depuis 15 jours, 10 morts; Heymourabad, depuis 10 jours, 2 morts; à Tchilling on a enregistré 2 décès il y a 20 jours, mais depuis l'épidémie n'y a plus été signalée.

Suivant des rumeurs, qu'il y a été impossible à la Commission de vérifier, jusqu'à présent les villages suivants sont infectés également: Divaneh, Abbas Khan, Djamalhebad, Lotfollah, Hosseina. Enfin un cas a été signalé dans le palais même du Gouverneur à Nasirabad (ville). Le malade emporté immédiatement est mort à un "farsak" de la ville.

Veuillez, &c.  
(Signé) WIBIER.

[5907]

No. 162.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 34.)

Sir,

*Tehran, February 2, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit copy of two despatches from His Majesty's Consul in Seistan, from which it would appear certain that the Russian Government has practically obtained control of the Meshed-Seistan telegraph line.

Since the return of the Shah from Europe in October last, I have made repeated efforts to discover from the Persian Government whether the Grand Vizier when at St. Petersburg demanded the withdrawal of the Russian telegraphists posted on the line. I have always been met by the answer that negotiations for their recall were still in progress and likely to result in a manner satisfactory to the Persian Government. Knowing the Persian character as I do, I think it most improbable that in the midst of the brilliant festivities at Peterhof the Grand Vizier, and still less the Shah, would have raised a question which they well knew was displeasing to the Russian Government. From Inclosure 2 in Sir Arthur Hardinge's despatch to Lord Lansdowne No. 200 of the 9th September, 1905, you will see that His Highness was duly reminded of the matter.

In the India Office letter of the 23rd June, 1905, the dispatch of two British signallers destined for Turbat-i-Haideri and Birjand was announced. On hearing of their arrival at Nasratabad, I wrote to the Minister of Telegraphs requesting him to give orders for their admission in the offices at their respective stations. After some delay his Excellency referred me to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, to whom I wrote making the same request. I have as yet received no written reply; but as I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 33 of the 31st ultimo the Mushir-ed-Dowleh has proposed to allow the two signallers to be posted at Turbat-i-Birjand, provided that His Majesty's Government undertake to withdraw them should the Russian Government withdraw their telegraphists on the Meshed-Seistan line. This Concession the Mushir-ed-Dowleh stated the Persian Government had decided to refuse, on the ground that negotiations with the Russian Government for the withdrawal of their employés were still in progress. But if His Majesty's Government would permit the Urmi Mollah to return home it would be granted. I pointed out to his Excellency that he had himself admitted to Sir Arthur Hardinge that whatever privileges were given on the Meshed-Seistan line to Russian signallers would also be given to an equal number of British signallers. I drew his attention to the fact that in the autumn of 1904 I had, by the instructions of Lord Lansdowne, formally claimed the right of His Majesty's Government to post signallers on the line identical in number with the Russian employés.

His Excellency, in reply, again stated that the Russian signallers were only temporarily on the line and would, he hoped, be shortly withdrawn.

It is, I think, unlikely that the Russian Government will in this respect meet the views of the Persian Government. Although the rights of His Majesty's Government are quite clear the Persian Government will, I am convinced, place every obstacle in our way, and to save time I ventured to recommend that the Mushir's proposal be accepted. This will not in any way compromise the right already claimed and may make it easier to post other signallers, should this hereafter be considered desirable.

The Urmi Mollah is old and in bad health. Mr. Wratislaw thinks that he has had a lesson, and will certainly help to keep the turbulent elements at Urmi quiet. If His Majesty's Government permit his return, the Shah and the Valiahd, who are very keen to get him away from Tabreez, will be pleased.

The Mushir-ed-Dowleh informed me last week that the Shah had decided to refuse the Nasratabad-Kuh-i-Malik-Siah extension. His Majesty's chief reason, which seems a frivolous one, was that we already had a telegraph line (the Central Persian) to the Beluchistan frontier. I told his Excellency that I thought His Majesty's refusal of what was a very small concession, would give considerable offence to His Majesty's Government, who were well aware of the telegraph concession made to Russia in the north. I took a map with me to his Excellency last Wednesday and explained carefully the reasons why His Majesty's Government desires the Kuh-i-Malik-Siah extension. He promised to show the map to the Shah and make a further attempt to change His Majesty's mind.

In these circumstances, a concession by His Majesty's Government in regard to the Mollah may, at this moment, influence His Majesty's decision.



not, as previously stated, from the Khabir-us-Sultaneh. Copies of the receipts have been taken and can be forwarded if necessary.

The Postmaster further stated that when he first paid over the money to the Russian Inspector the latter did not know for what object it had been sent, but that some five days subsequently he received letters from the Khabir-us-Sultaneh and the Kniaz Vavchadze, when he immediately gave out the money was for the repair of the line.

The above fact, coupled with the general information given in my previous letter, would appear to offer almost conclusive proof that the control of the line has, in spite of assurances to His Majesty's Legation to the contrary, been definitely handed over to the Russians.

Copies of this letter are being forwarded to the Government of India and His Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) A. D. MACPHERSON, *Captain,*  
*His Britannic Majesty's Consul for Seistan and Kain.*

[5908]

No. 163.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 35.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 2, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Meshed, embodying his views on the present state of Persia, and suggesting the formation of a movable mounted column at and around Kuh-i-Malik Siah.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 163.

*Acting Consul-General Sykes to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 2.)

Sir,

Meshed, January 20, 1906.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 4 of the 4th January, 1906, I have the honour to inclose herewith, for your information, copy of a letter No. 9, Confidential, dated the 19th January, 1906, which I have addressed to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, on the subject of a movable mounted column at and around Kuh-i-Malik Siah.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) P. MOLESWORTH SYKES, *Major.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 163.

*Acting Consul-General Sykes to Government of India.*

Sir,

Meshed, January 19, 1906.

WITH reference to my telegram in which, in reply to one from His Britannic Majesty's Legation asking for suggestions, I proposed the formation of a movable mounted column at and around Kuh-i-Malik Siah, I have the honour to give my reasons for the above suggestion.

2. It appears to me that the end of Persia is approaching, and the reasons for this, together with the signs of the beginning of the end, are many. Chief among the former is the fact that the Persian debt is steadily being added to, whereas the resources of the country are not increasing.

I understand that about five-sevenths of the debt that the country can stand without insolvency has been already contracted, or, in other words, that proportion of the road to ruin has been traversed.

This debt, it may be incidentally mentioned, has not been used to develop Persia, but the money has been squandered abroad.

Chief among the signs of the end is the growing disgust of the Persians for

the present state of affairs, which disgust is voiced by the newspapers and is organized by means of the post and the telegraph, although the latter is still the Shah's most powerful instrument for keeping his loosely strung Empire together. Thirteen years ago, when I first travelled in Persia, the late Shah occasionally was abused, but more generally he was lauded. To-day, all classes unite in condemning, not only the Monarch as an individual, but the vicious system he represents.

Again, revolutionary ideas are undoubtedly catching, and the sight of what is going on in Russia is slowly but surely producing an effect which it is impossible as yet to gauge, but it is evident that the seed sown will bear fruit in the minds of the entire Babi community, and probably among the majority of the upper and trading classes.

A minor point is that the employés at the Russian Bank, the doctors, and men of business are all revolutionaries, and consequently busy sowers—indeed, many of them have been sent to Siberia or have been imprisoned. For example, the Chief Manager of the Russian Bank has, I understand, been incarcerated in the Peter-Paul fortress.

In short, Persia may linger on for a few years, but it is equally possible that the existing order of things may come to an end without warning. In any case, it seems desirable to take precautions betimes for the latter eventuality.

3. Should Persia break up, the occupation of Persian Baluchistan and Seistan would be a matter of first-rate—nay, of almost vital—importance to the Government of India. In this connection the occupation of Seistan by us would, for all practical purposes, include that of Baluchistan, as no Russian force could enter the latter district except by way of the delta of the Helmund, whereas it could be seized by British forces operating from the east and south.

This being granted, it is obviously urgent to exclude rival influences from the Helmund delta, or at all events to secure paramount position of British influence by every legitimate means. This, I take it, has been the motive underlying the opening up of the Nushki trade route, the MacMahon Mission, and, indeed, the foundation of the British Consulate in Seistan.

4. Before formulating a proposal it is as well to turn our eyes to the north. There we find Askhabad, the head-quarters of a Russian Army Corps, within a few miles of the Persian frontier, and at Sarakhs there is a force of at least 500 to 1,000 men in normal times on the actual frontier, in addition to various smaller garrisons.

There would thus be nothing to which exception could be taken by the Persian Government, if the British Government were to form a cantonment on its own frontier, Kuh-i-Malik Siah.

If objections were made, the action of the Northern Power could be cited, and apart from this the proverbial ill-wind, in the shape of plague, is in itself a quite sufficient reason for taking such a step.

5. The advantages of such action would be:—

(a.) Seistan would be once and for all ours whenever Persia breaks up, and there will be no race for it with the awkward possibility of a collision with the forces of Russia.

(b.) Russia would see this, and it is quite possible that, in view of Seistan being out of her grasp, she would, on that account, be slow to disturb the *status quo* which it is our policy to preserve.

(c.) His Majesty's Legation could threaten to increase the garrison in Seistan, or other and stronger measures when dealing with the Government of the Shah.

An additional point is that Meshed could be reinforced safely from the Seistan escort, and although I do not anticipate serious trouble at present, and also consider that the approach of reinforcements might precipitate the very danger it was intended to avert, this question has to be considered.

Finally, our position in Khorassan and in Afghanistan would be strengthened immensely.

It is indeed extraordinary that at present there is no outward and visible sign of British power at any point along the many hundreds of miles where Persia is conterminous with the British Empire. This offers a great contrast to what one sees in the north, and constitutes a serious source of weakness in our dealings with the Persian Government.

6. The size and constituent parts of such a force are not within my province to deal with; but I would suggest that both for transport and the secure mobility the

country is ideally suited for camels. Suitably equipped a column could reach Seistan in less than two days, and the fact that this can be done should be brought clearly home to the Persians on the frontier, who, by the way, have an exaggerated respect for artillery.

7. Against this suggestion there appear to be but three objections from the military point of view:—

- (a.) The extra cost of feeding such a body of men.
- (b.) The undesirability of isolating such a small force.
- (c.) The climate.

As to the extra cost, it need not be serious after the first year or two, as, generally speaking, the demand creates supply, and in normal years Afghan Seistan produces a sufficiency of supplies. In any case for a force relying on camel transport the cost of rations would not be very serious. As to (b) I would urge that there is no danger of such a force being cut off, whereas the experience gained by keeping it on the frontier should certainly counterbalance any temporary numerical loss to the strength of the British forces in India.

As to (c) the climate is not as hot or by any means as trying as Seistan. It will, I think, prove to be comparatively healthy.

Troops might suffer from the monotony to a certain extent, although occasional raids from across the frontiers would be splendid training for all concerned.

These being the only important military objections to the scheme, I hope that the Government of India may see fit to consider the advisability of stationing permanently a small force of Indian troops, equipped with a special view to mobility, on the frontier at or near Kuh-i-Malik Siah.

8. A copy of this letter is being sent to His Majesty's Legation and to His Majesty's Consul at Seistan.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) P. M. SYKES.

[5935]

No. 164.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 111.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, February 7, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to state that I addressed a private letter to Count Lamsdorff, copy of which I have the honour to inclose, embodying your telegram No. 34 of the 2nd February, on the subject of financial aid to Persia.

To-day I attended Count Lamsdorff's official reception and spoke to him on the subject.

His Excellency informed me that, on the preceding day, he had laid the letter before the Emperor, and that His Majesty had charged him to express his satisfaction at this communication. Count Lamsdorff added that he was quite of the opinion that an end should be put to the practice under which the Persian Government was able to obtain money from the English or the Russian Government by playing off one against the other. Besides which, the service rendered to Persia, by offering a loan, was much like that afforded by a moneylender to a spendthrift—which only made him reckless and plunged him deeper into embarrassment.

He expressed his satisfaction at the frank nature of the communication, and asked me to inform you accordingly.

I gathered from his language that he regarded the idea of a loan to Persia with disfavour, and did not press him as to the suggestion that, if the Russian Government thought a loan advisable, His Majesty's Government was prepared to enter into negotiations on the subject. Nor did I allude to the possibility of the repetition of the circumstances attending the loan of 1899, in which year the Russian Government, although Lord Salisbury had expressed his willingness to enter into negotiations for a joint loan, and while the negotiations were pending, had sanctioned a large advance, nominally made to the Persian Government by a private bank. This question was fully discussed between Count Lamsdorff and Sir Charles Hardinge on the 6th ultimo (see his Excellency's despatch No. 32), and both Count Lamsdorff and Count Witte must be fully aware of the effect on public opinion in England of what would appear, after the formal and written communication just made by order of His Majesty's

Government and accepted with satisfaction by the Emperor, as little short of a breach of faith. I alluded, however, to the language held by Count Lamsdorff to His Majesty's Ambassador and reported by him in the above-mentioned despatch, and observed that the communication I had made was based on the assurances exchanged on that occasion.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

Inclosure in No. 164.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Count Lamsdorff.*

(Particulière et Confidentielle.)  
Cher Comte Lamsdorff,

*Saint-Petersbourg, le 23 Janvier  
(5 Février), 1906.*

COMME votre Excellence le sait, Sir Edward Grey a dit au Comte Benckendorff, dans une conversation qu'il a eue avec son Excellence le 13 Décembre (n.s.), que, tout en admettant que le moment n'était pas opportun pour entrer en pourparlers en vue d'arriver à une entente ayant pour objet de régler les différences entre les deux pays, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté, de sa part, pendant le délai inévitable, éviterait toute action de nature à rendre plus difficiles les négociations qui auraient lieu dans ce but, ou de compromettre la possibilité d'un arrangement éventuel.

Se basant sur ce principe, Sir E. Grey a récemment déclaré au Gouvernement Persan, en réponse à des représentations au sujet de l'état actuel des finances Persanes, que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique n'était pas disposé à sanctionner une avance pécuniaire en faveur du Gouvernement du Schah.

En faisant part à votre Excellence, à titre confidentiel, de ce qui précède, je suis chargé de l'informer que le Gouvernement Britannique entend que le Gouvernement Russe, de sa part, animé d'un esprit de réciprocité et du désir de ne pas introduire dans la situation actuelle un élément nouveau, ne permettra pas que le Gouvernement Persan reçoive un secours pécuniaire des autorités financières Russes.

Si, toutefois, pour quelque raison, le Gouvernement Impérial le croit désirable de prêter un appui financier à la Perse et qu'il veut bien considérer la question de concert avec le Gouvernement Britannique, je suis chargé d'assurer votre Excellence que Sir Edward Grey est tout prêt à entrer en discussion à ce sujet dans un esprit de conciliation.

Veuillez, &c.  
(Signé) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

[5930]

No. 165.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 19.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 16th February, relative to Hienjam affairs.

*India Office, February 17, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 165.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*February 16, 1906.*

PLEASE refer to the telegram of the 8th February from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran as to Hienjam situation. Grant Duff's recommendations have our general concurrence, but it would not, in our opinion, be desirable to locate some 500 (?) turbulent Arabs on Bassidore, having regard to the small area of the British possession there, and to the uses to which it may have to be put.

(Repeated to Tehran and Bushire.)

[1618]

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[6193]

No. 166.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 19.)*

Sir,

*India Office, February 19, 1906.*

IN reply to Mr. Campbell's letter of the 13th instant, I am directed to state that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the terms of the telegram which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs proposes to send to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran relative to the telegraph station at Henjam and the situation regarding the Arabs on the island.

I am to add that Mr. Morley agrees with the view of Sir Edward Grey that there are serious objections to the proposal to offer the Arabs in question a domicile at Basidu.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[6143]

No. 167.

*The Persian Minister to Sir Edward Grey.*

THE Persian Minister presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour of inclosing herewith a Memorandum containing the translation of a telegram from His Royal Highness the Atabeg-e-Azam on the subject of Mr. Grant Duff's statements in reference to His Imperial Highness the Shoa-os-Saltaneh and his Vazir.

*Persian Legation, February 19, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 167.

*Memorandum.*

IN his Excellency Sir Edward Grey's Memorandum of the 17th ultimo, in regard to the statements of His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires in Tehran, it had been remarked that Mr. Grant Duff disclaims absolutely having spoken in the terms mentioned in the Atabeg-e-Azam's telegram during his conversation with His Royal Highness with reference to His Imperial Highness the Shoa-os-Saltaneh and other matters; and that His Britannic Majesty's Government were confident that the Atabeg-e-Azam must have misunderstood the remarks made by Mr. Grant Duff. The contents of the Memorandum having been communicated to the Atabeg-e-Azam, the following reply has been received from His Royal Highness:—

"In regard to Sir Edward Grey's observations that the British Chargé d'Affaires in his conversation with me did not demand the removal from his post of His Imperial Highness the Shoa-os-Saltaneh within 24 hours, and that he did not speak in the terms referred to. The statements made by the Chargé d'Affaires were those that have been telegraphed. Abbas Ghali Khan Nawab, who had accompanied him, acted as interpreter. He knows English well, and it cannot be imagined that there was any error or inaccuracy in the interpretation; moreover, the Chargé d'Affaires himself, who knows Persian, repeated the remarks in Persian. As regards the expressions used in reference to His Imperial Highness the Shoa-os-Saltaneh and his Vazir, which it is stated the Chargé d'Affaires had used in a private letter addressed by him to the Moshir-od-Dovleh, these expressions were used both in the Chargé d'Affaires' private communication and in his official notes to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs—in fact, the manner of his correspondence is very acrimonious, and is contrary to usage. But the Foreign Office here has so far preferred to abstain from making use of such terms in its communication.

"A few days ago the Legation complained that Issa Khan, the 'seraidar' (caretaker) of the Legation, had made excessive charges in regard to some building work which had been executed there. It was arranged that the work should be inspected, and if it was found that Issa Khan had made any excessive charge, the excess should be refunded by him. A builder was sent to inspect the work; Issa Khan, the 'seraidar,' was also sent to the Legation with a special Foreign Office functionary in order that he should

[6285]

No. 168\*.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 20)*

(No. 52.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 20, 1906.*

AN offence has been committed on board a British ship in Bahrein Harbour by a Persian subject of bad character. The man is a refugee from Persia resident at Bahrein. After inquiry, our Political Agent has come to the conclusion that the man deserves two years' imprisonment. He has, however, power to try British-Indian subjects only. Please instruct how man should be dealt with. It seems inadvisable to raise the question of jurisdiction here.

Consul-General at Bushire has informed the Government of India of the above.

show the work to the builder. The Legation, without any reason and right, took Issa Khan and incarcerated him at the Legation. He was thus detained there for two days. Two notes were exchanged between the Foreign Office and the Legation, asking the Legation to set Issa Khan free; the replies received from the Chargé d'Affaires were most acrimonious, and in a manner contrary to custom. At last the Foreign Office was compelled to send the Meftah-os-Saltaneh (chief of the section having charge of British affairs) to the Legation, and he obtained the release of Issa Khan from the Chargé d'Affaires, and took him away from the Legation.

"In the case of the muleteer who was guilty and was punished in Shiraz for the sake of affairs connected with His Britannic Majesty's Consulate, and for neglecting to take care of the goods of a British subject, the Chargé d'Affaires decided that the Vazir of Fars should apologize to the Consul, but he himself incarcerates the 'seraidar,' who is sent with a special Foreign Office functionary to the Legation for the purpose of taking part in the inspection of the building work, and does not even release him after several communications from the Foreign Office.

"There are several similar matters, but I do not like to prolong these discussions. Being sure, however, that Sir Edward Grey would not approve of such actions, I have referred to this one by the way, and for his information; and I am confident that his Excellency will give a hint to the Chargé d'Affaires, in the manner he thinks best, in regard to his altering his mode and attitude."

*February 19, 1906.*

[6165]

No. 168.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)*

(No. 50.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 19, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India and St. Petersburg:—

"Persian loans.

"Foreign Office despatch No. 143 of 4th October, 1905.

"I last night received a message from the Grand Vizier stating that he was now prepared to accept the 150,000% formerly offered. I said that I would lay the matter before you, but that I thought it unlikely, in view of the recent refusal of His Majesty's Government to grant a loan, that the previous offer was still open.

"His Highness now thinks that he will not be able to pay the sum due to the bank by September (see my telegram No. 49), and I gathered that the sum now asked for would be used to pay off that debt.

"The general opinion is that the Grand Vizier's position is very uncertain. The fact of his sending the above message to me looks as if he had so far failed to get a promise from Russia."

[6165]

No. 169.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Grant Duff.*

(No. 33.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, February 20, 1906.*

LOAN.

His Majesty's Government are not disposed to renew the offer made last July, which has since been set aside by proposals from the Persian Government of an entirely different nature.

You should inform the Grand Vizier in this sense with reference to his message transmitted in your telegram No. 50 of yesterday.



[4841]

No. 170.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Grant Duff.*

(No. 34.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, February 20, 1906.*

HENJAM.

You should inform Persian Government that, until the limits of the British telegraph station have been satisfactorily settled, His Majesty's Government will be obliged to object to any coercive action being taken by the Persian Government against the Arabs. Such action would be considered likely to endanger the safety of British telegraph officials, and if taken would lead to adoption of Major Cox's suggestion to send a war-ship to the spot. As an additional reason for an early settlement of the question on the lines indicated in my telegram No. 8 of the 9th January, you should urge the present state of excitement which exists among the Arabs (see Lieutenant Shakespeare's letter to the Resident of the 21th October, 1905).

His Majesty's Government will be willing, as soon as a satisfactory settlement has been arrived at, to notify to Arabs, if the Persian Government desire it, His Majesty's Government's recognition of Persian sovereignty, and to endeavour to obtain their acquiescence.

We do not favour the suggestion contained in your telegram No. 41 of the 8th February, that Arabs should be offered British domicile at Basidu. It is admitted that Arabs are Persian subjects, and although the station is British property, it stands on a Persian island. Accommodation and adequate protection could not conveniently be afforded to the Arabs, while awkward questions might be asked as to their status and as to limits of station, which are undefined.

[6434]

No. 171.

*Persian Transport Company to Foreign Office.—(Received February 22.)*

3, Salter's Hall Court, Cannon Street, London,  
February 21, 1906.

Sir,

WITH reference to your letter of the 22nd December, 1905, touching on certain matters connected with the Bakhtiari road, I have now the honour to submit for your consideration the views of my Board on these questions.

With regard to the statement that the Chiefs "had offered to pay the 3,000 tomans to your Ahwaz Agent, but that the latter had refused to take the money," no such offer has to our knowledge been made to our Ahwaz Agent. Mr. Preece is, perhaps, referring to Mr. Parry, for some time acting as our Agent in Tehran and now in Bagdad, with whom the Chiefs had some conversation during his passage through their country in August 1905, as reported to you in our despatch of the 9th October, 1905.

The action of Mr. Parry in this matter appears to have been strictly correct. The Chiefs submitted their proposal to us through His Britannic Majesty's Consulate-General at Ispahan in December 1904 (communicated to us in your despatch of the 17th March, 1905), and our reply, contained in my letter to you of the 22nd March, 1905, was also referred through His Britannic Majesty's Consulate-General, but does not appear to have reached the Chiefs until November 1905. Therefore our Agents could not, in the meantime, accept any sum tendered by the Chiefs or treat with them on the subject without previous advice from His Britannic Majesty's Legation or Mr. Preece. My Board desire to point out that the Company has made every effort to avert any such misunderstanding with the Chiefs, as we reported to you in our letter of the 9th October, 1905.

With regard to the condition of the road, my Board note that the Chiefs "had, therefore, caused the road to be repaired themselves." There is some conflict of evidence as to the present condition of the road, and in this connection my Board submit that it is important to discriminate between accounts given by individual travellers, passing over it with picked animals very lightly loaded, and the accounts of muleteers and camel drivers responsible for the safety and condition of heavily laden caravan animals.

I submit for your information the inclosed extracts from our latest advices on this point from our Ahwaz and Ispahan Agents, dated respectively the 8th and 9th November, 1905. The road was constructed by us for the purposes of trade, and,

if the muleteers who have been frequenting it are now refusing to accept loads over it, the natural inference is that it has become unfitted for their needs. I may observe that the camel caravan, the most economical form of transport in Persia, is withdrawn from a stony or neglected track long before the mule or donkey caravan. Competition being withdrawn, rates rise and trade suffers.

My Board venture to suggest, in view of these contradictory reports, that His Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz be instructed to take note of the complaints made by the muleteers, and to visit the road this spring to report on its condition (1) in respect of fitness for the passage of mercantile caravans, and (2) in comparison with the condition in which it was originally handed over to the Bakhtiari Chiefs. We should be pleased to engage Mr. Parry, who has now a wide knowledge of road-making in Persia, to accompany His Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul on the journey, and to furnish evidence as to the second point as well as to tender any expert advice. His charges (which we estimate at 4l. 4s. per day, including travelling expenses) for the actual days out from Ahwaz we should subsequently include in our account for repairs.

My Board consider that, inasmuch as this road was built for the purpose of providing a new trade route for British commerce, and was therefore charged to the Chiefs at bare out-of-pocket cost, the Company is entitled to demand that the Chiefs should not be permitted to allow the road to deteriorate from the condition in which it was handed over to them, especially as it is now paying the Chiefs handsome dividends. My Board perceive with regret that the fitful expenditure by the Chiefs on surface repairs, and the cost involved in sending independent expeditions to preserve the bridges only, cause an annual charge for repairs quite out of proportion to the results achieved. For this reason the Company is still prepared to accept the onerous duty of directing upkeep expenditure on the conditions expressed in my letters of the 22nd March and 9th October, 1905, but the Chiefs should agree that the sum to be allocated to general repairs should now be increased to 50,000 krans, seeing that they were disposed to pay 10,000 krans last year and 10,000 krans this year for current repairs, in addition to the 30,000 krans proposed by them for general repairs. I am directed in this connection to request your consideration of the last paragraph of my letter of the 9th October, 1905. Our proposal is extremely modest—that the Legation, and perhaps also the Chiefs, should accept in principle that the Company should have reasonable remuneration for their services. Such remuneration might take the usual form of a commission on all expenditure.

As regards the bridges, it is, as you know, essential that these should be overhauled after the winter, and before the passage over them of the numerous caravans, as well as migratory tribes with all their flocks and herds. We are therefore obliged to send up our engineer as usual to overhaul them this spring. The cost of this work will be passed as usual to our account with the Chiefs for repairs. This account was last made up and a copy submitted to you in my letter of the 29th November, 1905. We have not yet received payment.

Lastly, with reference to the capital account, the Imperial Bank of Persia, Ispahan, advised our Agent there on the 16th November last that they were receiving from the Chiefs for our account 27,283 krans. My Board have already submitted their views on the subject of capital reimbursement, but we shall feel obliged if you will kindly inform us whether His Britannic Majesty's Legation is cognizant of this payment, and in what manner the Legation wishes to allocate it. I am to protest against payment of such sums in Ispahan as irregular.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) FRANK BOTTOMLEY, *Secretary.*

Inclosure 1 in No. 171.

*Messrs. Lynch Brothers to Persian Transport Company.*

(Extract.)

*Ahwaz, November 8, 1905.*

*Bakhtiari Road.*—We have just had a large caravan in this morning, consisting of 100 camels. The head man of this caravan complains very much of the condition of the track, and the charvadars are refusing to take other than very light loads on their return journey. They say that if we cannot comply with their demand, they will return to Ispahan by way of Shiraz. We shall no doubt be able to talk them round all right, but the fact remains that the road is in a bad condition, and unless something be done

[1618]

2 S

in the near future we shall have to anticipate worse troubles later on. As it is, we may take it for granted that these camelteers will not again attempt to work on the road until the bad places are repaired. They complain more especially of three bad places, viz., Mulwarrie, Shellil, and Godar. The first of these places is, they say, very rough with loose stones, which render travelling very tedious and tiring to the animals. The second bad place—Shellil—is where the track has been cut on the side of a hill. There is not sufficient room for a loaded camel to pass, and one side being somewhat precipitous, renders the place extremely dangerous. The third place referred to is that steep hill going up from Godar bridge. The road here has become very rough and full of loose stones; it is also considerably rain-washed. Not only are these particular places bad, but the road generally is dilapidated, and the track is going from bad to worse, and the sooner repairs are effected the better—delay will be fatal. We have a winter coming on, and, bad as the road is at the present time, its condition next spring after the rain and snow may be easily imagined. It is difficult enough to obtain animals as it is, and it will be doubly so later on unless something is done.

Inclosure 2 in No. 171.

*Messrs. Lynch Brothers to Persian Transport Company.*

(Extract.)

*Ispahan, November 9, 1905.*

MAY we request you to let us know if anything has definitely been settled regarding repairs on this road? A good deal of the increase of traffic depends upon the expected thorough repairing of this road, and unless something is done promptly towards it we are not hopeful of sending down a large number of camels next spring.

[6580]

No. 172.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 23.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 22nd instant, relative to the case of a Persian resident in Bahrein.

*India Office, February 22, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 172.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*India Office, February 22, 1906.*

TELEGRAM has been received from Chargé d'Affaires, Tehran, relative to case of a Persian subject, resident in Bahrein, who has committed offence on board British ship in the harbour there. Political Agent, Bahrein, considers that man deserves two years' imprisonment, but his powers enable him to try British subjects only. Grant Duff requests instructions how to deal with the case, facts of which he says have been communicated to you by Resident in the Persian Gulf. Please let me have your views; it is necessary to take into consideration objection to raising jurisdiction question with Persian Government.

[6615]

No. 173.

*Director of Military Operations to Foreign Office.—(Received February 23.)*

THE Director of Military Operations presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith some observations on Mr. E. Grant Duff's No. 272, dated the 23rd December, 1905, as requested in his letter dated the 16th February, 1906.

*General Staff, Winchester House,  
St. James's Square, London, February 22, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 173.

*Observations on Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas's Report on the "New Road from Kazvin to Hamadan."*

THE importance of this new road, as a road, lies in the fact that it directly connects Enzeli and Kazvin with the main trade route, Tehran-Hamadan-Baghdad.

2. Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas's opinion in the concluding paragraph of his Report, namely, that the road "has not been made with any intention of converting it into a railway," cannot, it is thought, be accepted without reservation. The construction of a railway on much of the alignment of the road seems possible, and the steep gradients could be overcome by tunnels or deviations. The question, it appears, in one of Russia's ultimate objective. If it be her purpose to link up her railway system with the Konia-Baghdad line, the first step would apparently be a line linking Enzeli with Hamadan, and the shortest way appears to be that followed by the road in question. An intention of this kind on her part receives colour from the statement of His Majesty's Consular Agent at Kermanshah that he had "heard privately that the engineers of the Russian Kazvin-Hamadan road have stated that their Company intend to apply for a concession to extend their road to Kermanshah."

3. Such a line would, moreover, bring Hamadan, and, therefore, the main trade route between Tehran and Baghdad, into connection with the Erivan-Julfa Railway, the extension of which is projected to pass through Kazvin.

4. A railway joining Enzeli, Kazvin, and Hamadan would, moreover, bring the first-mentioned place considerably nearer to the head of the Persian Gulf, a point worthy of consideration in view of the recent Russian press campaign regarding the Persian Gulf.

5. These considerations, and the statement made by the Mushir-el-Mulk to Mr. Spring-Rice, seem to justify a modification of the opinion expressed by Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas.

[6472]

No. 174.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 22.)*

(No. 53.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 22, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India and Bushire:—

"Henjam.

"I addressed a note to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh in the sense of your telegram No. 8 of the 9th ultimo. In reply, his Highness informed me yesterday verbally that, the only right to which the Persian Government could regard us as entitled was to the houses of which mention is made in the original concession of the year 1868. If, his Excellency added, His Majesty's Government wished to hold land at Henjam, they must ask the Shah for a grant in the usual manner.

"It was in vain that I pointed out that the Telegraph Department had held the land for twelve years without the Persian Government raising any protest, and that the water supply had cost them large sums. I said that it was unreasonable of the Persian Government to expect Europeans to live on the island unless a sufficient extent of land were placed under their control.

"I am to-day addressing a note to the Persian Government in the sense of your

telegram No. 34, the substance of which I have already communicated verbally to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

"His Excellency promised to inquire of the Grand Vizier as to the reported intention of the Persian Government to use coercive measures against the Arabs. He himself professed ignorance of any such intention."

[5895]

No. 175.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 32.)

Sir,

*Foreign Office, February 23, 1906.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 22 of the 31st ultimo, forwarding your correspondence with the Persian Government respecting the beating administered by the Vazir of Fars to a witness who had been sent to him by His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz.

I approve the terms of the note addressed by you to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh on this subject.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[6661]

No. 176.

*India Office to Foreign Office — (Received February 24.)*

Sir,

*India Office, February 23, 1906.*

IN continuation of my letter of the 3rd instant, inclosing a copy of a telegram, dated the 1st February, to the Viceroy, and a note by the Director of Military Operations regarding the dispatch of troops to Persia in the event of disturbances in that country, and with special reference to my letter of the 18th ultimo, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to transmit, for the consideration of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a copy of the reply of the Government of India to the telegram mentioned above.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 176.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*February 15, 1906.*

YOUR telegram of the 1st instant as to guards for Persia.

While winter conditions prevail cavalry would be unable to cross ranges between Bushire and Ispahan. It was for this reason that in our telegram of the 11th ultimo we proposed infantry as having better chance of getting through the country. Risk involved in sending small parties across Persia was fully recognized by us when we undertook, subject to condition which will be within your recollection, to decide whether that risk might reasonably be incurred. We have since received Sir A. Hardinge's note of the 23rd December, and other information which indicates that situation in Persia may become critical at any moment owing to want of funds. So far the only question we have considered is that of strengthening guards of British Legation and Consulates against temporary disturbances. We observe that, in letter from Foreign Office of the 28th December, the suggestion was made that force should be made available for dispatch with least possible delay to Tehran, or any other part of Persia, should necessity arise owing to disturbances or other causes. If His Majesty's Government contemplate the more serious measures which appear to be indicated in the Foreign Office letter of the 28th December, we shall no doubt be informed at the earliest possible date, as the arrangements for the dispatch of the necessary force would require discussion and time for preparation.

[6812]

No. 177.

*India Office to Foreign Office. — (Received February 24.)*

Sir,

*India Office, February 23, 1906.*

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to acknowledge receipt of Mr. Campbell's letter of the 16th instant, forwarding, for his concurrence, the draft of a telegram which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs proposes to address to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran with reference to the action to be taken to obtain from the Persian Government reparation for the attack on Colonel Douglas and Captain Lorimer in Luristan.

In reply I am to say that, in Mr. Morley's opinion, the claim to compensation is not at all a strong one, and he would be glad to know whether Sir E. Grey shares this view, and, if so, whether the proposed telegram should not be modified.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) HORACE WALPOLE.

[6665]

No. 178.

*India Office to Foreign Office. — (Received February 24.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 25th ultimo, relative to Henjam affairs.

*India Office, February 23, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 178.

*The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) R.

*Bushire, January 10, 1906.*

COPY of Foreign Office letter to the India Office dated the 27th October, and copy of Henjam Concession 1868, as now furnished by Mushir-ed-Dowleh, and in which only accommodation is mentioned, and not any grant of land, have just been received by me from the Legation. There is no difficulty about amicable arrangement of details between Director-General, Customs, and self; but to this end, what I need are instructions as to the pronouncement which must of necessity be made at the same time to the Arab community, and must be accompanied by such precautions as to insure safety of our staff.

Addressed to Government of India. I have repeated this telegram to Tehran, as well as that of the 6th instant.

[6825]

No. 179.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey. — (Received February 24.)*

(No. 54.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 23, 1906.*

FOLLOWING sent to India to-day:—

"The Armenians of Tehran have forwarded me a communication drawing attention to the attempts of the Calcutta newspaper 'Habl-ul-Matin' to excite anti-Armenian agitation in Persia. The circulation of this paper in Persia is very large, and in view of the approach of Moharrem and of the troubles in the Caucasus such propaganda constitutes a real danger.

"I trust that the further publication of objectionable articles may be prevented."

[6830]

No. 180.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 24.)*

(No. 55.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, February 24, 1906*

FOLLOWING repeated to India:—

"In view of the attempts of the Russian Consulate in Seistan to make political capital out of the plague outbreak, His Majesty's Consul there has proposed, for the consideration of the Government of India, the two following alternatives:

"1. That, should Russian intrigue fail to develop to an extent materially injurious to our interests, we should advise the Persian Government that the Government of India, fully confident of the ability of the Persian Frontier Officer and the Director of Customs to suppress the plague, and to prevent its spreading to Persian provinces or to British territory, propose that the Sanitary Council be dissolved, and that full powers be conferred on the Persian officials mentioned above, with liberty to ask advice on purely medical questions from the British and Russian doctors.

"2. Should more pronounced action be found necessary owing to the flagrancy of Russian intrigue, that the removal of the Russian Consulate Doctor from the Council should be demanded, on the ground that he persistently utilizes his position to gain political advantage."

The dissolution of the Seistan Council would probably be objected to by the Tehran Sanitary Council, and they would probably advise the Persian Government not to entertain the suggestion. The Persian Government, on their side, view with the greatest suspicion any proposal regarding Seistan emanating from us.

The Government of India are disposed to accept the first of Captain Macpherson's alternative proposals, but a possible solution, in view of the attempt which is being made to come to some understanding with Russia, might be to induce the Government of Russia to send instructions to their officials in Seistan to modify the attitude which they at present adopt, at least for so long as the plague continues.

If this last suggestion should not be practicable, I should be inclined to concur with the view taken by the Government of India, and, with your sanction, would propose to sound the Persian Government as to whether they would be willing to dissolve the Seistan Council.

[5369]

No. 181.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, February 24, 1906.*

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, copy of Sir A. Hardinge's observations on the points raised in your letter of the 31st August last, relative to the organization of a Russian service of motor cars for the transport of goods to Tehran, and the measures which might be adopted in order to prevent possible injury to British commercial interests.

It will be observed that Sir A. Hardinge considers that an arrangement might without difficulty be concluded with the Sani-ed-Dowleh, enabling British motor cars to run on the Ispahan, Tehran and Southern Persia roads. He further expresses his views as to the present condition of these roads, the possible improvement of communications in Southern Persia, and the probable cost of measures undertaken for such a purpose.

I am to state that Sir E. Grey will be glad to consider any proposals which Mr. Morley, or the Government of India, may wish to make on the subject.

Sir E. Grey requests, however, that Mr. Morley's attention may be drawn to the letter from the Board of Trade of the 29th ultimo (forwarded to your Department on the 7th instant), containing notes of an interview with Mr. MacLean, the London manager of the Persian Transport Company. It will be seen that Mr. MacLean, who, as Mr. Morley is aware, possesses an exceptionally intimate knowledge of Persia, and of Persian commercial questions, takes an unfavourable view with regard to the prospects

\* No. 131.

of motor traction in Persia at the present moment, and is inclined to doubt the utility, from a practical point of view, of certain of the proposals made for the construction or improvement of communications in order to facilitate motor traffic. It is in any case evident that the Transport Company, on whose co-operation the success of such schemes would be mainly, if not entirely, dependent, regard them as likely to prove unremunerative, and would be unwilling to embark upon them unless assured of the financial support of His Majesty's Government, or the Government of India.

Sir E. Grey is not aware what view the Government of India are likely to take of this question. But, as regards the attitude to be adopted by His Majesty's Government, he is opinion, and would suggest for Mr. Morley's consideration, that, while private enterprise should receive a full measure of moral and diplomatic support, the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury could not reasonably be expected to sanction a Government guarantee of, or expenditure from, British funds on undertakings of such a nature. It appears to him doubtful whether financial sacrifices would be justified by corresponding political advantages; moreover, from a political point of view, he does not consider that it should be the policy of His Majesty's Government to embark on any new enterprises in Persia at the present moment.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GORST.

[6837]

No. 182.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 25.)*

(No. 45.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

*St. Petersburg, February 25, 1906.*

PERSIA.

In answer to my inquiry relative to a paragraph in the official Messenger, Director of First Department informs me that a Commission is being sent to Persia to inspect and report on the work on Enzeli-Tehran and Jalfa-Tabreez roads, just completed. Russian Consuls at Tabreez and Resht are members of the Commission.

There is no question of railway.

(Sent to Tehran.)

[6914]

No. 183.

*Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)*

(No. 109.)

Sir,

*Constantinople, February 21, 1906.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 921 of the 18th December, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from the Military Attaché to His Majesty's Embassy, reporting a movement of Persian troops towards the Turkish frontier.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 183.

*Colonel Surtees to Sir N. O'Connor.*

(No. 9.)

Sir,

*Constantinople, February 20, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to bring to your notice that the Persian Governor of Luristan, Sarim-us-Sultaneh, has arrived with a large force of mounted men at Badrai, which is situated about 130 miles due east of Bagdad, and has encamped there.

This movement was reported to Constantinople on the 15th instant by the officer in command of the VIth "Ordu" from his headquarters at Bagdad, who stated that, in view of such a demonstration of force, he had ordered the necessary dispositions to be taken.

This action on the part of Persia would appear to have been taken either as an answer to the menacing attitude of the Turks in the Wazna district, or as a precaution against a possible attempted seizure by the Turks of the disputed Seyyid Hassan lands.

It is to be observed that the distance from Badrai to Bagdad is scarcely longer



than that from the Wazna district to Tabreez, and, in point of time, probably much shorter. The Persians, therefore, if they contemplate the possibility of hostilities, have probably adopted a course strategically sound.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) H. CONYERS SURTEES, *Military Attaché.*

[7198]

No. 184.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 28.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a Secret despatch to the Government of India, dated the 16th instant, relative to the Henjam-Bunder Abbas cable.

*India Office, February 27, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 184.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Secret.)

My Lord,

*India Office, February 16, 1906.*

WITH reference to the papers forwarded to me under cover of your Secretary's letter of the 21st December, 1905, I transmit herewith, for the information of your Excellency's Government, copy of correspondence with the Foreign Office in regard to the suggestion that the land line of the Henjam-Bunder Abbas telegraph should be run through the British Consulate at Bunder Abbas before it is carried into the Persian Office.

Your Excellency will observe that, while the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs sees no objection to the scheme if it can be arranged on technical grounds, he is of opinion that, if the Persian Government were to take serious objection to it, it could not well be pressed.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) JOHN MORLEY.

[6830]

No. 185.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 36.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

PLAGUE in Seistan.

*Foreign Office, February 28, 1906.*

With reference to your telegram No. 55 of 24th February, it would be better to meet Russian intrigues locally, but if it becomes necessary to take more vigorous action, we must follow the proper course and make representations to the Russian Government through His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg. If this becomes necessary, I must be furnished with full details of the acts complained of, as it will be difficult to substantiate charges.

It is specially desirable to avoid any friction at this moment, and it is doubtful whether the Russian Government, the Tehran Sanitary Council, or the Persian Government would consent to the removal of the Russian doctor or the dissolution of the Seistan Council.

Besides the difficulty of grounds on which such demands could be based, the Russians would certainly resent the proposal to remove the doctor, and the manner in which that proposal was made.

[7400]

No. 186.

*Imperial Bank of Persia to Foreign Office.—(Received March 1.)*

Sir,

*25, Abchurch Lane, London, March 1, 1906.*

ON the 11th January last I addressed to your predecessor in office an important letter, in which I explained certain difficulties which had arisen in the financial relations of the Imperial Bank of Persia with the Persian Government. I venture to inclose a copy of this letter, for which I have the honour to solicit your consideration and that of the Secretary of State, and on which the Board of the Imperial Bank would be glad to be furnished with the views and wishes of His Majesty's Government. The situation as described in that letter is altered by the failure of the Shah's Government to meet the promissory note for the overdraft, and by the personal appeal of the Shah, in the Memorandum, or "Dastkhat," addressed to his Minister in London, to the Imperial Bank to meet his wishes, as expressed to me by his Minister, and accept drafts on the southern customs in lieu of the promissory note, payable by instalments spread over three or four years. The urgency of this request, and the difficulty of refusing this accommodation to the Sovereign of the State in which the Imperial Bank does business, form my excuse for troubling you. A copy of the Shah's letter is herewith inclosed.

I have, then, the honour to inquire whether the Imperial Bank would be supported by His Majesty's Government in any future difficulty which might arise from a compliance with the wishes of the Shah for a prolongation of the term of repayment of the overdraft beyond the limits of the Bank's concession. For it must be considered that this overdraft was not a voluntary loan, but merely the honouring of cheques drawn by the Persian Government in a time of great difficulty during the Shah's absence from his country, which the Imperial Bank could not, with any propriety, have refused. The overdraft was made in reliance on the payment of a loan by the Indian Government to Persia through the Imperial Bank, which loan, we understood from the Foreign Office, was sanctioned and ready to be forthwith granted.

Unless some assistance be rendered by the British Government to Persia, the Board of the Imperial Bank cannot but fear that a serious crisis may result. They are unwilling to refuse a personal request of the Shah, but, without some specific assurance of support from the Foreign Office, which has never been denied them in difficult circumstances, and without which their position in Persia would be untenable, they are unwilling to increase their responsibilities, which are already causing them some anxiety.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) LEPEL GRIFFIN, *Chairman.*

Inclosure 1 in No. 186.

*Imperial Bank of Persia to Foreign Office, dated January 11, 1906.*

[Already printed.]

Inclosure 2 in No. 186.

*The Atabeg-i-Azam to the Persian Minister in London.*

(Translation.)

(Telegraphic.)

*February (?) 24, 1906.*

YOUR Highness' telegram has been laid before His Imperial Majesty, who has issued a "Dastkhat" (Rescript), which I hereby communicate to you in full:—

"Ala-os-Sultaneh,

"I have seen the telegram which you had dispatched to his Highness the Atabeg-i-Azam in reference to the Imperial Bank's overdraft account, and have become acquainted with the discussion you have had on the subject with the Chairman of the Bank. I want you particularly to arrange this matter with the Chairman as soon as possible in the manner telegraphed to you by his Highness the Atabeg-i-Azam, and thereby set our mind at rest."

[7396]

No. 187.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 1.)*

(No. 57.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 1, 1906.*

FOLLOWING sent to St. Petersburg :—

“Your telegram of the 25th February.

“British Acting Consul-General at Tabreez reports that the Julfa-Tabreez road is almost finished, and that a Russian Commission is expected at Tabreez shortly to take it over.”

[7418]

No. 188.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 1.)*

(No. 58.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 1, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India :—

“Witness beaten by Deputy Governor of Fars.

“No apology has been offered to His Majesty's Consul by the Deputy Governor.

[6812]

No. 189.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, March 1, 1906.*

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd ultimo, suggesting a modification of the terms of the telegram which it is proposed to address to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, relative to the action to be taken in order to obtain from the Persian Government reparation for the attack on Colonel Douglas and Captain Lorimer in Luristan.

Sir E. Grey, while prepared to admit that the claim for compensation may not be a strong one, desires to point out, for the consideration of the Secretary of State for India, that there has been nothing in the action or attitude of the Persian Government since the delivery to them of Sir A. Hardinge's note of the 11th January, 1905, which would justify a modification of the views then expressed on behalf of His Majesty's Government. He considers, moreover, that to leave the Persian note of the 31st December, 1905, without a rejoinder would imply acquiescence in the contentions of the Persian Government, and might also have the effect of encouraging resistance on their part to other British demands.

I am therefore to express Sir E. Grey's hope that Mr. Morley will concur in the terms of the amended draft telegram to Mr. Grant Duff, copy of which is herewith inclosed.\*

I am, &amp;c.

(Signed) E. GORST.

• [7632]

No. 190.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 3.)*

Sir,

*India Office, March 3, 1906.*

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to acknowledge Sir E. Gorst's letter of the 1st instant relative to the action to be taken in order to obtain from the Persian Government reparation for the attack on Colonel Douglas and Captain Lorimer in Luristan.

In reply, I am to say that, in view of Sir E. Grey's opinion, Mr. Morley is prepared to concur in the terms of the amended draft telegram to Mr. Grant Duff.

I am, &amp;c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

\* Not printed.

[7638]

No. 191.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 3.)*

(No. 60.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 3, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India and Seistan :—

“Water Award. Your telegram No. 91 of the 1st December.

“I have received a reply in the following sense to my note to the Persian Government :—

“‘Yamin-i-Nizam has been instructed to withdraw the letter, which he was not authorized to send.

“‘In the opinion of the Persian Government the Award is prejudicial to their interests, and the following are the reasons for which they ask for its amendment :—

“‘1. The Goldsmid Award has not been followed by the Arbitrator, who has only adopted the interpretation which the British Foreign Office put upon it.

“‘The Persians are deprived of the right of opening up old canals and constructing new ones, which is conceded to the Afghans, since the canals lie in Afghan territory. A large tract of Persian soil will thus be left uncultivated.

“‘2. The share of water given to the Persians only suffices to irrigate 200,000 acres of land, although the Arbitrator was aware that the Persians possess over 500,000. The cultivated lands held by the Persians being double in extent of those held by the Afghans, Persia claims two-thirds of the water instead of the one-third awarded to her.

“‘3. Persian peasants will emigrate to Afghan territory, where cultivation will be rendered possible.

“‘4. The Goldsmid Award contains no reference to any restriction regarding the alienation of water to a third party. The application of this restriction to Persia alone is against her honour, and it should be applied equally to Afghanistan.

“‘5. The appointment of a permanent irrigation officer would have been unnecessary if judgment had been given in accordance with Goldsmid Award.’”

[7362]

No. 192.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 38.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, March 3, 1906.*

AS regards compensation for the attack on Colonel Douglas and Captain Lorimer, dealt with in your despatch No. 2 of the 3rd January, you should inform the Persian Government that, in our opinion, the dilatory and inefficient measures taken by them for the punishment of the culprits, together with the unsatisfactory nature of the results achieved, preclude any modification in the attitude of His Majesty's Government.

You should also urge them to take advantage of the present season to secure the punishment of the Lurs, and if you have not already done so, you should address the Salar-ed-Dowleh in similar terms.

[7400]

No. 193.

*Foreign Office to Imperial Bank of Persia.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, March 3, 1906.*

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant relative to certain difficulties which have arisen in the financial relations of the Imperial Bank of Persia with the Persian Government, and to inform you that this letter, and your previous communication of the 11th January last, have received the careful consideration of His Majesty's Government.

It would appear that the Persian Government, finding themselves unable to meet the promissory note to the Imperial Bank for an overdraft incurred in the course of last summer, have requested the bank to accept, in lieu of immediate repayment, drafts on the southern customs payable in instalments, that the bank desire to accommodate the Persian Government in the matter, but that they are reluctant to do so unless His Majesty's Government will give them a specific assurance of support.

Sir E. Grey notes your statement that the overdraft in question was made in reliance on the grant of pecuniary assistance to Persia by the Government of India through the intermediary of the Imperial Bank, but he cannot admit that the offer of a loan on certain conditions to the Persian Government, which they did not at the time show any disposition to entertain, can be held to render His Majesty's Government in any way responsible for the action taken by the Imperial Bank in the matter.

The question whether the Imperial Bank should accept the proposal now made by the Persian Government to extend the term for the repayment of the overdraft is not, in Sir E. Grey's opinion, one in which His Majesty's Government can undertake the responsibility of offering advice. The Imperial Bank are themselves best able to judge the merits of the proposal, both from the point of view of finance and of expediency, and it is for them to decide the matter in accordance with what they conceive to be their truest interests.

I am to add that, in the event of the Persian Government failing to fulfil their engagements to the Imperial Bank, your Directors may rely in the future, as in the past, on a full measure of diplomatic support from His Majesty's Government through the British Legation at Tehran. But you will readily understand that it is impossible for His Majesty's Government to incur any financial liability for such operations as the bank may feel called upon to undertake.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GORST.

[7660]

No. 194.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 5.)*

(No. 141. Confidential.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, February 18, 1906.*

ON receipt of your telegram No. 42 of the 17th instant, relative to the reported intention of the Imperial Bank of Persia to make an advance to the Persian Government on certain conditions, one of which was the acceptance by Persia of the Seistan Water Award, I prepared a private letter to Count Lamsdorff, copy of which is inclosed, informing him that the rumour was groundless. I called on M. Hartwig, the Director of the Asiatic Department, and handed him the letter with the request that he would communicate it to Count Lamsdorff.

He at once expressed his satisfaction, and said that the rumour had probably been due to the desire of the Persian Government to excite Russian apprehensions in order to obtain the wished for loan. I observed that a similar policy was followed with regard to ourselves, and that I hoped an end would be put, by a frank interchange of ideas, to a state of things which enabled Persia to play off England against Russia and Russia against England.

M. Hartwig agreed, and added that the Russian Government would not have attached much importance to this rumour, if it were not for the fact that the MacMahon Water Award had been mentioned as one of the terms of the loan, and that according to recent reports the result of the Seistan Water Award would be to cut off the water supply from Seistan and to turn the country into a desert. As you are aware, the facts of the case are that Persia will obtain more water under the MacMahon Award than was ever obtained before, and M. Hartwig's assertion shows the partial character of the reports which have reached him. He went on to say that the Award had been kept secret; that the evil was aggravated by the fact that the map showing the Award had been confided to the Karguzar of Seistan with the promise to keep it secret—an assertion which M. Hartwig had already made to Sir Charles Hardinge, as reported in his despatch No. 573 of the 26th September. The tenor of his remarks was, in fact, the same as that already recorded, and led naturally to the conclusion that the details of the Award should be communicated to the Russian Government, in order that they might be enabled to form a judgment as to its equity. He did not, however, allude to what he had told Sir Charles Hardinge, namely, that the Russian War Department was responsible for the objections to the Award on the ground that the fertility of Seistan would be thereby diminished, nor did he mention a Commission of Inquiry. He, however, insisted with some earnestness that the frank communication of the Award would be of assistance in improving Anglo-Russian relations in Persia.

Speaking more generally, he said that he expected soon to go to Persia as Minister, and that he hoped that he would be instrumental in arriving at an arrangement between the two countries. I reciprocated the desire, and asked him what he thought the basis of such an agreement would be. He said Central Asia and Persia presented no difficulties; the assurances already exchanged between the two Governments, in regard to the relations of Afghanistan, the guaranteeing of the independence and integrity of Persia and the security of the succession to the Throne, were a wide and firm basis on which an agreement could be constructed.

He repeated the assurances already made to Sir Charles Hardinge as to the absurdity of the idea of a Russian invasion of India. He then added that the main point—that on which Russia laid most stress—was the question of Article II of the Treaty of 1871 relative to the closing of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. If Russia received satisfaction on this point, which was so wounding to her dignity, she would be easily dealt with on other matters.

I observed that the question of the straits was one that concerned other Powers besides ourselves. Not to speak of France, to whom, in regard to this question, we were very specially bound, there were other Powers who would have to be considered.

M. Hartwig replied that he was aware that any attempt at agreement which Russia and England might make would be carefully watched, and, where possible, thwarted, by the inevitable jealousy of Germany; but that he hoped that the recent object-lesson which had been presented to Europe would be a sufficient warning, and that we should constantly bear it in mind.

With regard to his definite request, namely, that the Seistan Award should be communicated to the Russian Government, I said that I would communicate it to you, but that I held out no hopes that it would be complied with. I venture to suggest that, if this step be adopted, it should only be taken as a part of a more general exchange of views with the Russian Government.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

Inclosure in No. 194.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Count Lamsdorff.*

(Personnelle et Confidentielle.)

M. le Ministre,

*St. Pétersbourg, le 4 (17) Février, 1906.*

JE me suis empressé de porter à la connaissance de mon Gouvernement le contenu de votre lettre du 2 (15) Février au sujet du bruit qui vous était parvenu, selon lequel le Gouvernement Persan serait en pourparlers avec la Banque Impériale de Perse en vue de conclure un emprunt de 150,000/., dont les prétendues conditions étaient même exposées en détail.

C'est avec un vrai plaisir que je vous fais savoir à présent, par l'instruction de mon Gouvernement, que le bruit en question—auquel, du reste, je n'ai attaché, dès le premier moment, aucune importance—est totalement dénué de fondement et que, au contraire, la Banque Impériale de Perse s'efforce à l'heure qu'il est de se faire rembourser par le Gouvernement du Schah une partie de l'argent qu'elle a déjà perdu [? prêté].

Il me paraît possible que cette histoire provient de la même source, et a été fabriquée dans le même but que les bruits de pareille nature au sujet de projets d'emprunt Russes qui nous sont parvenus de temps en temps.

Je me permets, en conclusion, de remercier bien cordialement votre Excellence de la parfaite franchise dont elle a fait preuve en portant aussitôt à la connaissance de mon Gouvernement les renseignements qui lui étaient parvenus.

Veillez, &c.  
(Signé) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

[7661]

No. 195.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 5.)*

(No. 142.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, February 19, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you, with reference to my despatch No. 141 of the 18th February, that Count Lamsdorff stated to me to-day that he had received your

[1618]

2 N

communication relative to the rumoured loan to Persia with great satisfaction. He added: "Is not this the best way of settling our difficulties between ourselves?"

I have, &c.  
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

[7668]

No. 196.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 5.)*

(No. 149. Confidential.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, February 28, 1906.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 141 of the 18th instant, relative to the Seistan Water Award, I notice in the Confidential print "Diary for Seistan and Kain No. 42 for the period 1st to 8th December, 1905," that Captain MacPherson observes that the false idea seems to prevail in Seistan that the one-third share of water allotted to Persia was calculated at the Band-i-Kohat, and not higher up the river at Bandar-i-Kamal Khan; which would give Persia a much larger share of water than if the division were to take place lower down.

He states that the Russians and the Karguzar (who possessed a copy of the Award) had probably suppressed this very material fact.

It is quite probable that the Russian Foreign Office is also in the dark as to this aspect of the case, and it might perhaps be desirable (on the supposition that the two Governments now desire to be perfectly frank with one another) that at any rate some particulars as to the Award might be unofficially communicated to the Russian Government, who seem to be under the impression that some material point is purposely being kept back.

There are no doubt reasons against communicating the plans and surveys *in extenso* which accompanied the Award, and which might be of service to the Russian military authorities at some future date, but would not be necessary for explanations sufficient to satisfy the Russians if they are raising objections in good faith in the interests of Persia.

It is true that the omission in the Award of any reference to the contingency of the Afghans reopening the old canal near Bandar-i-Kamal Khan and restoring to fertility the now desert tract of Tarakun might, in Sir Arthur Hardinge's opinion, give rise to criticism.

I submit, however, for consideration, whether it might be as well to take an opportunity of communicating unofficially, in order to avoid misunderstandings, the actual text of the Award, as there can be little doubt that sooner or later the Persians themselves will communicate it.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

[7672]

No. 197.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 5.)*

(No. 153.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, February 28, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you that on the 24th instant a notice appeared in the "Government Gazette" to the effect that a Commission was leaving for Persia composed of the President of the administration of the Enzeli-Tehran and Tabreez Railway Companies, the Persian Insurance and Transport Company, and several Government officials for the purpose of taking over the recently finished roads from Enzeli to Resht, Kazvin to Hamadan, and Julfa to Tabreez.

The notice added that the Commission included a Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Consul at Resht, and the Consul-General at Tabreez.

In the course of an interview which I had with Count Lamsdorff on the same day, I observed that such a paragraph with its mention of Russo-Persian Railway Companies, and other details was likely to have an unfortunate effect on public opinion in England. He replied, with evident annoyance, that he had not seen the paragraph and that the "Gazette" in question committed "bêtise sur bêtise." The

statement was absurd as railway construction in Persia was at present out of the question and contrary to the Agreement.

I venture to observe that this statement shows the correctness of Sir Arthur Hardinge's supposition that the Railway Agreement with Persia was renewed in 1900, not for a term of five years, as stated by the Persian Government, but for ten.

On the same day I received a private letter from M. Hartwig informing me "à titre privé" that, as I was probably aware, Russia had two concessions for the construction of carriageable roads (not railways), Enzeli-Tehran and Julfa-Tabreez. As these roads are now finished a Commission of Inquiry was being dispatched in order to inspect the roads on the spot and report as to their condition. (It might be added that the experience of the Russian Government with the Russian engineers at Enzeli and at Tabreez amply justified the precaution.)

M. Hartwig added:—

"Par suite d'un accord entre le Ministère des Finances et le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, nos Consuls à Tauris et à Recht sont nommés membres de cette Commission."

I had the honour to telegraph the contents of this letter to you and to Tehran on the 25th February.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

[6661]

No. 198.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, March 5, 1906.*

I HAVE laid before Secretary Sir E. Grey your letter of the 23rd ultimo, forwarding for his consideration paraphrase of a telegram from the Government of India, on the subject of the measures to be taken for the protection of His Majesty's Legation at Tehran and British Consulates in Persia in the event of internal disturbances in that country.

In connection with the observations contained in the two concluding sentences of this telegram, regarding the character of the measures which are contemplated, I am directed by Sir E. Grey to state that he is not of opinion that the situation demands that any preparations on a large scale should be made. Feeling in Persia at the present moment appears to be directed solely against the Persian Government, and there are, as yet, no indications of its having assumed an anti-foreign tendency.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GORST.

No. 199.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Grant Duff.*

(No. 41.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, March 6, 1906.*

SEISTAN Water Award.

You should inform Persian Government, with reference to your telegram No. 60 of the 3rd instant, that if they really desire to persist in refusing to accept the Award a reasoned appeal in due form must be submitted by them for my decision, in accordance with the agreement come to in November 1902 (see Mr. Erskine's despatch No. 156 of the 10th November of that year).

[8224]

No. 200.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 34.)

Sir,

*Foreign Office, March 6, 1906.*

THE Persian Minister asked to see me to-day, and told me that he had come in order that he might inform the Shah whether the British and Russian Governments



had an understanding between each other. I said that we desired to be on friendly terms with the Russian Government, and had made that known, and that they also desired to be on friendly terms with us. The Persian Minister continued to press me as to whether we had any definite understanding in the sense, for instance, that we had an understanding with France. I said we had not got any definite agreement with Russia about details, as we had with France. The Persian Minister then asked whether we had an intention of making any such agreement. I said that it was impossible to say anything about intentions. This sort of thing depended on circumstances. We had had difficulties with the French Government with regard to Egypt, Newfoundland, and other questions, and we had removed these by a definite agreement. Should we in the future have difficulties with the Russian Government, we no doubt might be desirous of removing these by agreement in the same way. But at the present moment I did not think we had any difficulty with the Russian Government which it was necessary to discuss in detail.

He asked me what our views were with regard to Persia, and I said that we desired to see the integrity and independent sovereignty of Persia maintained.

He then pressed me very much on the subject of the loan which the Persian Government desired, and asked me what we meant by saying that we could not lend money under present circumstances. I said that I thought the Persian Government had borrowed enough money already, and that we should not, by lending them more, be doing anything to promote the strength of Persia. The Persian Minister asked me whether we would not do at least what Lord Lansdowne had promised to do when he offered to lend 150,000*l.* or 200,000*l.* I replied that when I came into office I found that that offer of Lord Lansdowne had not been accepted by the Persian Government. They had put forward an entirely new demand for 800,000*l.*, which we were not prepared to lend, nor were we prepared to renew the offer of the smaller loan, which had not been accepted, and had been put aside by the Persian Government. The Persian Minister then pressed me further as to whether we would lend money to Persia if the Persians would use it to pay off the Russian loan, but I said we could not entertain this proposal. He then asked me what advice I would give should the Persian Government appeal to British capitalists for a loan, and should the British capitalists apply to the Foreign Office for advice. I said that we could not advise any British capitalist to lend money to Persia without guaranteeing the loan or in some way taking responsibility for it ourselves, and as we were not prepared ourselves to lend money to Persia I did not see how we could facilitate Persia's borrowing elsewhere. He urged that if we would not lend the money the Persian Government would have to apply to Russia, and pressed me for advice as to what they should do. I said that I was very sorry not to be able to give a favourable answer, or to give the particular assistance for which he asked, but that as I was not giving that assistance it was not possible for me to give advice with regard to the borrowing of money.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[5908]

No. 201.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, March 6, 1906.*

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, forwarding a report from His Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed relative to the present situation in Persia.

In connection with Major Sykes' observations regarding a British occupation of Seistan in the event of the break-up of Persia, Sir E. Grey considers that although the question of annexing Seistan in such an eventuality is not one for this Department to decide, it would be advisable that a clear and reasoned decision should be drawn up on the subject.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GORST.

[5891]

No. 202.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 35.)

Sir,

*Foreign Office, March 7, 1906.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 18 of the 30th January last, reporting the recent agitation at Yezd against the school of the Church Missionary Society.

Your action in the matter has my approval.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[8209]

No. 203.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 8.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a paraphrase of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 2nd instant, relative to the plague in Seistan.

*India Office, March 8, 1906.*

Inclosure in No. 203.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*India Office, March 2, 1906.*

PLAGUE in Seistan.

In reply to his telegram of the 24th February, Grant Duff has been instructed that consent of either Tehran Sanitary Council, Persian Government, or Russian Government to dissolution of Seistan Council or removal of Russian doctor is doubtful. Russia would certainly resent latter proposal, and it is particularly desirable to avoid friction at present moment. If it should hereafter become necessary to take more pronounced action, the proper course would be to address the Russian Government through His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg, but it would be difficult to substantiate charges, and Grant Duff would have to furnish full particulars of acts concerning which complaint was made.

[8148]

No. 204.

*Persian Transport Company to Foreign Office.—(Received March 8.)*

3, Salter's Hall Court, Cannon Street, London,  
March 7, 1906.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inclose, for your information, copies of correspondence recently received from our agents abroad on the subject of disputes that have arisen among the Bakhtiari Chieftains. From this it will be seen that the two brothers, Haji Ali Kuli Khan (Sirdar Assad) and Khosru Khan (Salar-i-Arfa), have ousted their brother Najaf Kuli Khan (Samsam-es-Sultaneh), and their cousin Gholam Hussein Khan (Shahab-es-Sultaneh), from their share in the government of the country. It is probably known to you that for some time past the Chieftainship of the Bakhtiari country has been divided between the sons of Hussein Kuli Khan (Ilkhani 1850-82), and the sons of his brother, Imam Kuli Khan (1882-88, known in the country as Haji Ilkhani). The Shahab-es-Sultaneh represented the latter branch, whereas Hussein Kuli Khan and Khosru Khan are both descendants of Hussein Kuli Khan (Ilkhani 1850-82). It appears from the letter of our Ispahan agent that the deposition of the Shahab-es-Sultaneh and of his cousin Samsam-es-Sultaneh (the latter a brother of Haji Ali Kuli Khan and Khosru Khan) has been confirmed by the Persian Government, who have raised Haji Ali Kuli Khan and Khosru Khan to the supremacy of Ilkhani and Ilbegi respectively.

[1618]

Our agents inform us that they have 900 loads of merchandize belonging to a number of clients waiting at Ahwaz for transport inland, and as much again arriving in Ahwaz by steamers now at sea. In order to provide transport for this merchandize we have to engage caravans at Ispahan, and to advance money to the owners before they start on their downward journey to Ahwaz. Our agents are apprehensive that the muleteers, after they have received the necessary advances, may not undertake their part of the contract, should there be dissensions among the tribes. As the spring season is now on us, it is of the utmost importance that we should have reliable information as to the safety or otherwise of the road; and we should be very much obliged if you will kindly telegraph to His Majesty's Legation in Tehran asking them to make the necessary inquiries through the Consulate-General in Ispahan to be transmitted to us. At the same time we should suggest that, as the Consul-General is absent from his post, and in view of the importance of the events that are taking place among the Bakhtiari, His Majesty's Consul at Ahwaz should be instructed to proceed without delay to the Bakhtiari country and keep himself in touch with the Chiefs.

In this connection I would venture to call your attention to the proposals contained in our letter of the 21st ultimo.

While on this subject permit us to inclose to you a copy of a telegram we have just received from our agents at Ahwaz. We are replying to the effect that we authorize these advances in return for a lien on the road revenues, such lien to be guaranteed by the new Ilkhani.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) FRANK BOTTOMLEY, *Secretary.*

Inclosure 1 in No. 204.

*Messrs. Lynch Brothers to Persian Transport Company.*

(Extract.)

*Ispahan, January 20, 1906*

*Bakhtiari Chiefs.*—In continuation to our letter of the 10th instant, we beg to give the following translation of the telegram addressed by his Highness Atabak Azam to Haji Ali Kuli Khan, Sardar Assad, who is now announced as the future Principal Chief of the Bakhtiari, copy of which we have obtained here:—

"Your Excellency,

"As it is His Majesty's desire to see the welfare of the Bakhtiari, its proper organization, and tranquil order, the office of Ilkhani and Ilbagi is being permanently granted to you, for which the confirmatory Commission will duly follow.

"You will hereafter attend to organize, order the tribal affairs, punish and reward those who deserve. You will in future deal strictly with those who cause disturbance, and at any rate future order must be assured. If any of your relations cause disorganization among the 'ils' his estates must at once be confiscated, and he will thereupon be dealt with as Government's betrayer.

"You are placed in a position to control the affairs of the Bakhtiari tribes, and you will thereupon be held responsible. On the contrary to the past and previous years, order and organization must be restored.

"The necessary telegraphic orders are being sent to the Governor-General of Arabistan to render you any assistance you may stand in need of for organization of your affairs.

"On receipt of this telegram Salah Arfa must proceed to Keshlagh (winter quarter), at once, to control the affairs there; and in accordance with His Majesty's command telegraphic orders are sent to the Arabistan Government to send back Moin Humayoon and Murtaza Kuli Khan (who were dispatched by Samsam-es-Sultaneh and Shahab-es-Sultaneh before departure) to Yeluk (summer quarter).

"After settlement of your tribal affairs you will pay a visit to Tehran, where further orders will be given you in person.

Inclosure 2 in No. 204.

*Messrs. Lynch Brothers to Persian Transport Company.*

(Extract.)

*Ahwaz, January 24, 1906.*

*Bakhtiari Chiefs.*—There has arisen a serious dissension among the Bakhtiari Chiefs, which, unless the unexpected happens, will jeopardize the safety of the road.

The Samsam-es-Sultaneh and the Shahab-es-Sultaneh have been relieved of their posts as Ilkhani and Ilbegi by the Persian Government, and, in their place, Haji Ali Kuli Khan has been appointed Ilkhani, whilst another of the Khans (we have not heard for certain who he is yet, but some say the Salar Arfa) has been made the Ilbegi.

For some time back the Persian Government, for some reason or other, has shown a distinct tendency to ignore the Samsam-es-Sultaneh, and appear to have seized the first opportunity of replacing him. Both Sheikh Khuzzel and the Salar Mouazzem have grievances against the Samsam—the former over the Raghowa question, and the latter on account of his refusal to assist him (the Salar) in the Beni Turruf expedition. The downfall of the Samsam is therefore largely due to the influences of the above aggrieved parties.

The Raghowa question has been a source of friction between the Ilkhani and the Sheikh for some time. It appears that some time back a party of Arabs from the Upper Karun refused to pay their taxes to the Sheikh, and cleared off to Raghowa, which is just over the border in the Bakhtiari country. Here they settled themselves and tilled the ground, &c. From time to time they were added to by other malcontents from the Sheikh's territory. Last year the Sheikh appealed to the Samsam to send these Arabs back to their country, in order that he might deal with them for their refusal to pay their dues. The Samsam at first refused, and then consented, but requested the Sheikh to wait until the harvest had been gathered in, and he would then let them go. The harvest was finished, but the Ilkhani had changed his mind, and the Sheikh appealed in Tehran. As a result of this appeal, the Samsam was ordered to give way, and to return the Arabs to the Sheikh. He still proved obdurate, and the Salar Mouazzem was sent up with 200 men to take them by force, which he did. This occurred last October.

The above are the main reasons for the downfall of the Samsam and the Shahab. The latter, doubtless feeling bound to support the policy of his Chief, naturally falls under the same ban, and shares the same fate as the Ilkhani. Upon learning that they had been deposed, the two Chiefs decided that the best course to adopt was to repair to Tehran in order to try and arrange matters, and on the 21st December they left Shalamzar, where they had spent the best part of the summer, for Tehran.

In the meanwhile, there is a gathering of arms in Bakhtiari land, and the tribes are taking sides. There are rumours of fighting. Stories of the most contradictory nature are continually coming in, and it is quite impossible to arrange them to show any semblance of truth as a result.

What may happen is beyond conjecture. If the deposed Chiefs are able to arrange matters to their satisfaction in Tehran, the whole trouble will fizzle out. But if, on the contrary, the appointment of Haji Ali Kuli Khan is confirmed, we fear that the tribes will be divided into two camps. We may, of course, be unduly pessimistic, but it is the opinion of every one here that the prospects are distinctly gloomy.

Inclosure 3 in No. 204.

*Mr. Parry to Persian Transport Company.*

(Extract.)

*Ahwaz, February 8, 1906.*

*Bakhtiari Chiefs.*—You have been already advised of the troubles which have arisen among the Bakhtiari Chiefs. News of a conflicting nature reaches here from Ram Hormuz and Malamir, but so far no serious disturbances have been reported. The Sirdar Assad (Haji Ali Kuli Khan) has been appointed Ilkhani in place of the Samsam-es-Sultaneh, and the Salar Arfa (Haji Khosru Khan) Ilbegi, in place of the Shahab-es-Sultaneh, by the Persian Government.

The cause of the Samsam-es-Sultaneh's dismissal is reported to be complaints made by Sheikh Khuzzel to Tehran that he sheltered a fugitive tribe of Arabs belonging to the Sheikh at a place named Raghowa, near Alwanieh; but I am inclined to believe that the desire to break up the power possessed by the union of friendship among the Chiefs is the motive which has brought about the downfall of the Samsam-es-Sultaneh and the Shahab-es-Sultaneh. Letters have been received at this agency, and by Mr. G. B. Reynolds, of the Oil Syndicate, from the Salar Arfa at Malamir, announcing his appointment, and stating that provisions are being made to protect the interests of all parties connected with business in the Bakhtiari country. It now remains to be seen whether the newly-appointed Ilkhani and Ilbegi will be strong enough to dominate the

Samsam-es-Sultaneh and his followers. Up to the time of writing this we have not heard of any difficulties on the road, although about 100 animals, dispatched from here recently, are still *en route*. In order, however, to be on the safe side, I have recommended Mr. Wilson to instruct Fazlullah Khan, your Ispahan agent, to withhold further advances to muleteers until the state of the country in regard to traffic has been ascertained. I am inclined to fear that muleteers holding advances from us, hearing that quarrels have arisen among the Bakhtiari Chiefs, may decline to travel over the road, making it difficult for us to recover the cash advanced.

Inclosure 4 in No. 204.

*Messrs. Lynch Brothers to Persian Transport Company.*

(Telegraphic.)

*Ahwaz, March 4, 1906.*

SALAR ARFA and Muntazem Dowleh require loans 500*l.* and 250*l.* for five months immediately. Shall we grant it? What interest shall we charge? Reply by telegraph.

[8466]

No. 205.

*Question asked in the House of Commons, March 8, 1906.*

Mr. T. Hart-Davies,—To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if his attention has been called to the Report of the Newcomen Mission to South-Eastern Persia; whether he will take into consideration the advisability of obtaining a concession for a road from Bunder Abbas to Kerman, and of appointing a Consul-General at Kerman of a rank equal to that of the Resident at Bushire, and of placing Vice-Consuls at Yezd and Bam; and whether he will consider the desirability of pressing on the Persian Government such reforms as will tend to facilitate trade between India and South-Eastern Persia.

*Answer.*

The Report in question has been received and is under consideration. The question of improving communications in South Persia has been carefully considered by His Majesty's Government; they are prepared to give a full measure of diplomatic support to private enterprise, but they would not feel justified in incurring expenditure from public funds on undertakings of the nature indicated. His Majesty's Government see no necessity for giving an increase of rank to His Majesty's Consul at Kerman; there are already a British Vice-Consul at Yezd and an Acting British Vice-Consul at Bam. His Majesty's Government have pressed, and will continue to press, upon the Persian Government the desirability of adopting every measure to facilitate the trade in question.

[8461]

No. 206.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 10.)*

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, paraphrases of telegrams relative to the dispatch of guards to Persia for the protection of the British Consulates.

*India Office, March 10, 1906.*

Inclosure 1 in No. 206.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*India Office, March 8, 1906.*

QUESTION of guards for British Consulates in Persia.

Your telegram of the 15th February.

As there are as yet no indications that feeling in Persia, which at present seems to be directed solely against Persian Government, has assumed an anti-foreign tendency, Sir Edward Grey does not think that the situation demands preparations on a large scale.

Inclosure 2 in No. 206.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.*

(Telegraphic.) P.

*March 9, 1906.*

GUARDS for Persian Consulates.

My telegram of the 15th and yours of the 1st ultimo.

As soon as the passes are open, cavalry, instead of infantry, will be held in readiness. Inquiries have been made as to when this will be.

[8148]

No. 207.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 42.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, March 10, 1906.*

PERSIAN Transport Company desire reliable information regarding the safety or otherwise of the Bakhtiari road.

The Company must engage caravans at Isfahan, and advance money to the owners, as they have a large quantity of merchandise waiting at Ahwaz for transport inland.

It is feared by the agents of the Company that, in the event of dissensions among the tribes, the muleteers, having received advances, might fail to carry out their contract. Can His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Isfahan supply this information or can you obtain it from other sources?

Do you see any objection, on account of possible risk, to the suggestion that His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz should proceed at once to Bakhtiari country, in order to get into touch with new Chiefs, and report upon state of affairs? He might also utilize the opportunity to inspect the road, furnishing his views on its present condition and on the expenditure necessary for its improvement.

[8542]

No. 208.

*Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 12.)*

(No. 147.)

Sir,

*Constantinople, March 5, 1906.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 5 of the 2nd January, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a Memorandum on the Turco-Persian frontier dispute, which has been furnished to me by the Persian Ambassador as an "historique de l'envahissement ainsi que la violation du territoire Persan par les forces Ottomanes," but which would be more accurately described as a résumé of the Persian case.

Up to the present, no progress appears to have been made in the negotiations for a settlement of this question between the Porte and the Persian Embassy.

It is true that the Persian Ambassador has received promises from the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Persian demand for a withdrawal of the Ottoman troops from Passwé should be settled satisfactorily, but reports from the Ottoman Commissioners now on the spot, just received by the Grand Vizier, appears not to be of a nature to lead to this result. One of the arguments of the Commissioners for the

retention of the disputed places by Turkey is that they are inhabited by "Ottoman," i.e., Sunni, as opposed to "Shia," or Persian tribes.

It is to be feared that the introduction of the religious element into the argument will not conduce to a speedy settlement of the dispute.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) N. B. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 208.

*Memorandum.*

GRACE à la haute et bienveillante intervention des Représentants des Cours Média-trices de la Grande-Bretagne et de la Russie, il a été décidé que le Traité de 1847 entre la Turquie et la Perse serait signé à Erzeroum (voir recueil de G. Naradounghian, p. 380, No. 139, Vol. II).

Le 9 Mars, 1848, leurs Excellences MM. les Représentants des Hautes Puissances Média-trices s'adressaient au Gouvernement Ottoman pour obtenir de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan la ratification du Traité signé à Erzeroum (voir recueil de G. Naradounghian, p. 386, No. 141, Vol. II).

Après la ratification du Traité, une Commission, composée de Commissaires des Quatre Puissances, a été envoyée sur les lieux pour délimiter la frontière de Zéhab jusqu'à Suléimanieh. A la suite de contestations entre les Commissaires Turc et Persan, chacun des Commissaires des Quatre Puissances exposa son avis à son Gouvernement. L'Angleterre et la Russie dressèrent une carte désignant tous les terrains en litige entre les Gouvernements Turc et Persan. Cette carte date de 1869, et comprend quatorze feuilles. Le 22 Octobre de la même année, les Ambassadeurs d'Angleterre et de Russie à Constantinople envoyèrent la dite carte avec une note Sub-No. 88, à la Sublime Porte, et leurs Excellences MM. les Ministres d'Angleterre et de Russie à Téhéran, remirent un exemplaire de la même carte au Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de Perse.

La dite carte a été adoptée comme exacte par les deux Gouvernements lors de l'Arrangement en date du 2 Août, 1869 (24 Rébi-ul-Akhir, 1286), ci-après mentionné, et le maintien du *statu quo* n'aurait pu être prononcé en l'absence de carte.

Dans le recueil des "Treaties, &c., between Great Britain and Persia," by Sir Edward Hertslet, C.B., imprimé à Londres le 1<sup>er</sup> Avril, 1891, p. 218, on trouve l'Arrangement suivant :—

"Les Puissances (l'Angleterre et la Russie) ont convenu que de Mouhammarah jusqu'à l'Ararat (montagne) une ligne de 700 milles Anglais de longueur, et de 20 jusqu'à 40 milles Anglais de largeur, était en litige entre les deux Gouvernements Turc et Persan; tous les terrains se trouvant du côté oriental de cette ligne appartiendraient incontestablement à la Perse, et les terrains situés du côté occidental de la même ligne à la Turquie."

En date du 2 Août, 1869 (24 Rébi-ul-Akhir, 1286) (voir recueil de G. Naradounghian, p. 290, No. 792, Vol. III), il a été passé un Arrangement Provisoire à Constantinople entre l'Ambassade de Perse et la Sublime Porte, et le dit Arrangement a été signé par son Excellence Ali Pacha, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, et son Excellence Mouchir-ul-Dovleh, Mirza Hussain Khan, alors Ambassadeur de Perse.

Dans l'Article 2 du dit Arrangement se trouve le passage suivant :—

"Le principe du *statu quo*, qui consiste dans le maintien tel quel sur les lieux en litige de l'état des choses existant au moment de la visite et de l'inspection faites par les Commissaires des Quatre Puissances sera strictement respecté par les deux Parties Contractantes, ainsi que par leurs Agents sur les lieux, et on se gardera de contrevenir à ce principe."

Dans l'Article 3 les lignes suivantes :—

"Les terrains en litige continueront à être placés, jusqu'au moment de la délimitation définitive, sous l'administration de l'État où ils se trouvaient lors de l'adoption du principe de *statu quo*, sans que toutefois cette situation puisse être considérée comme un titre de possession."

Et dans l'Article 5 ce qui suit :—

"En cas de contestation en pareille matière, les Agents des deux États se trouvant sur les lieux tâcheront avant tout d'aplanir la difficulté à l'amiable et d'une manière conforme au prestige et aux droits des deux Parties, et cela, soit par correspondance, soit verbalement; s'ils ne parviennent pas toutefois à tomber d'accord, ils rapporteront les faits aux autorités Centrales respectives et en attendront les instructions."

Maintenant, comme on le voit, le Gouvernement Turc a violé les termes de trois Articles précités; en voici la preuve :—

1. D'après l'Article 6, en cas de contestations, les Agents des deux États devaient, d'une manière conforme au prestige et aux droits des deux parties, soit par correspondance, soit verbalement, tâcher d'aplanir les difficultés; et s'ils ne parvenaient pas à tomber d'accord, ils devaient rapporter le fait aux autorités Centrales des deux Gouvernements et en attendre les instructions; les forces Ottomanes, en violant les prescriptions du dit Article 6 et sans se soumettre à ses dispositions, ont passé la frontière.

2. Lorsque, en 1854, les Commissaires des Quatre Puissances visitèrent la frontière, Derviche Pacha, Commissaire Ottoman, voulut faire aller le Pacha de Ravandouz à Lahidjan, mais le Commissaire Persan s'y opposa. MM. les Commissaires des Puissances Média-trices adressèrent une note à Derviche Pacha en date du 21 Juillet, 1854, dans laquelle ils disaient que, comme le Commissaire du Gouvernement Persan s'opposait à ce que le Pacha de Ravandouz se rendît sur le territoire Persan, le dit Pacha ne pouvait, sans la permission du Gouvernement Persan, dépasser l'endroit nommé Kalleh-Chine, qui est le nom d'une grande pierre située dans la vallée de la chaîne de montagnes appelée Kandili.

Cette note prouve bien que la limite à Lahidjan va jusqu'au sommet de Kandili et que Vezué est situé du côté oriental de Kandili; or, comme lors de la visite des Commissaires des Quatre Puissances, Vezué était sous l'administration du Gouvernement Persan, cette localité devait par suite de l'Arrangement précité (Article 3) continuer à rester sous l'administration du Gouvernement Persan jusqu'à délimitation définitive.

3. Les forces Turques non seulement ont occupé Vezué et violé le principe du *statu quo*, mais encore elles ont dépassé la ligne en litige et envahi Passvah et Lahidjan, qui se trouvent sur le côté oriental de la zone contestée et qui appartiennent incontestablement au Gouvernement Persan. En ce faisant, elles ont causé des dommages graves au Gouvernement ainsi qu'aux habitants de ces contrées.

[8725]

No. 209.

*The Imperial Bank of Persia to Foreign Office.—(Received March 12.)*

Sir,

25, Abchurch Lane, E.C., March 10, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of, and thank you, for your letter dated the 3rd March, the contents of which have been noted by my Directors.

I am requested to transmit herewith, for your information, copy of a letter addressed by the Chairman of the Bank to His Highness the Persian Minister in London on the 7th instant.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) G. NEWELL, Manager.

Inclosure in No. 209.

*The Imperial Bank of Persia to Prince Mirza Mohamed Ali Khan.*

Your Highness,

25, Abchurch Lane, E.C., March 7, 1906.

I HAVE, as I have promised, laid the matter of the overdraft due to the Imperial Bank before the Board. The Directors do not see any advantage in agreeing to the proposal which you have urged on me, viz., that the promissory note should be replaced by customs drafts paying the overdraft in instalments over a term of three or four years.



They are unable to accept the personal responsibility of changing an involuntary advance (made to the Persian Government in time of difficulty) into a voluntary loan spread over several years.

The Board are satisfied with the security of the promissory note endorsed by His Imperial Majesty, and if the Persian Government be not able to meet this obligation immediately, they will instruct the Chief Manager to obtain its renewal, to be paid within their financial year, namely, the 20th September, 1906.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) LEPEL GRIFFIN, *Chairman.*

[7668] No. 210.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Spring-Rice.*

(No. 124.)  
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 13, 1906.*  
I HAVE received your despatch No. 141, Confidential, of the 18th ultimo, reporting a conversation with M. Hartwig, Director of the Asiatic Department in the Russian Foreign Office, on the relations of Great Britain and Russia, in which he requested that the terms of the Seistan Water Award, recently delivered by Colonel Sir H. McMahon, should be communicated to the Russian Government.

Although this Award is a matter solely affecting Great Britain, Persia, and Afghanistan, and one in which Russia is in no way concerned, His Majesty's Government desire to meet in a friendly spirit any wish expressed by the Russian Government in regard to Persian questions. You are therefore authorized to communicate unofficially to Count Lamsdorff the text of the Award, herewith annexed,\* as well as the accompanying map, copies of which were handed by Colonel McMahon to the Persian and Afghan Commissioners to be forwarded to their respective Governments. You should not fail to draw his Excellency's attention to the friendly feelings which animate His Majesty's Government in authorizing this communication.

The opportunity has been taken of consulting Colonel McMahon, who is now in London, on the points raised by M. Hartwig in his conversation with you. Colonel McMahon asserts that there is no foundation for the statement that he endeavoured to keep the terms of the Award secret, nor is there anything in his letters forwarding it to the Persian and Afghan Commissioners to justify such a supposition. He adds that no map was at any time given by him to the Karguzar of Seistan, and the only map communicated to the Commissioners was that of which a copy is attached to this despatch.

I see no objection to your pointing out to Count Lamsdorff, as suggested in your despatch No. 149 of the 28th ultimo, that the Persian share of the water will be calculated at Bandar-i-Kamal Khan, some 40 miles before the Helmund leaves Afghan territory, but you should avoid entering upon any discussion of the terms of the Award, which do not concern the Russian Government, as it might give rise to questions of a complicated and controversial nature. It would be better that you should confine yourself to expressing surprise that objections should have been raised to a settlement so advantageous to Persian interests.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[9247] No. 211.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)*

(No. 65.)  
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, March 16, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India and Bushire:—

"Bakhtiari Road.

"Your telegram No. 42 of the 10th March, and my despatch No. 63.

"No caravans can pass at present, as the road is blocked with snow. I have received no reports of robberies of late.

"I would suggest that it would be well for the Vice-Consul at Ahwaz to furnish a report on tribal affairs, and that, for this purpose, he should proceed at once to

\* See Confidential Paper No. 8634.

Ram Hormuz in order to put himself into communication with the Chiefs. He might travel with the Chiefs and inspect the road when they move to their summer quarters about the end of April. The snow should melt shortly, and there ought to be no risk in this plan.

"The difficulty about guards has, I understand, now been settled."

[9419] No. 212.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 45.)  
Sir, *Tehran, February 26, 1906.*

SINCE the return of the Shah from Europe in October last, I have repeatedly asked the Mushir-ed-Dowleh for a reply to Sir Arthur Hardinge's note to the Persian Government of the 14th August last (see No. 175, of 1905, to Foreign Office), on the subject of the desired telegraph extension from Nasratabad (Seistan) to Kuli Malik Siah.

I inclose such correspondence as has recently taken place with regard to the matter.

Although the Mushir-ed-Dowleh does not mention in the inclosed note what the difficulties are which prevent the Shah from at present complying with the request of His Majesty's Government, his Excellency informed me privately that the Russian Government are pressing to be allowed to take over the Tehran-Resht telegraph line, and the Persian Government are determined to do what they can to prevent this.

As I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 46, of the 14th instant, his Excellency confidentially informed me that if His Majesty's Government renewed their demand for the Kuli Malik Siah extension at a later date the Persian Government would reconsider their present decision.

I may add that the Mushir-ed-Dowleh states that the line to the Russian frontier at Badjiran was granted after much pressure by the Russian Legation, who declared that the Persian Government had allowed the British Government to build the central Persian line, and must therefore give Russia a *quid pro quo* in the north.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF

Inclosure 1 in No. 212.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

(Private and Confidential.)

Dear Mushir-ed-Dowleh, *Tehran, February 10, 1906.*

ABBAS KULI KHAN informs that your Excellency yesterday stated, during a conversation he had the honour to have with you, that His Majesty the Shah was unable, on account of certain difficulties which have arisen, to consent to the linking up of Nasratabad and Kuli Malik Siah by a telegraph line.

I have done my best on various occasions to explain to your Excellency the reasons which influence His Majesty's Government in asking the Persian Government to allow this extension, and I have also informed your Excellency that, in view of the permission given to the Russian Government to construct the Kuchan-Badjiran line the refusal of the Persian Government to allow the Kuli Malik Siah extension is certain to give offence to His Majesty's Government.

I earnestly hope that your Excellency will make a further effort to induce His Majesty the Shah to reconsider his decision, as I can hardly believe that His Majesty can be fully aware of the impression his refusal cannot fail to produce on His Majesty's Government.

In any case, I have the honour to request that the decision of the Persian Government may be conveyed to me in writing, as I must at once inform His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the matter by telegraph.

Inclosure 2 in No. 212.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(Private.)

February 16, 1906.

I HAVE received and submitted to the Shah your private note of the 10th instant, respecting the telegraph line between Nasratabad and Kuhi Malik Siah. Some time ago Sir A. Hardinge, His Britannic Majesty's Minister, made some representations on the subject, and he was informed of the difficulties the Persian Government had in this matter. No doubt you are informed of the fact, and now that you have renewed this request I have the honour to state that, in view of the difficulties the Persian Government have along the proposed line, and of which you were verbally informed during our interview on Wednesday, the 14th instant, they are excused from accepting the proposal.

[9420]

No. 213.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 46.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 26, 1906.

IN accordance with the instructions contained in your telegram No. 24 of the 3rd instant, having failed to obtain the sanction of the Persian Government to the Nasratabad-Kuhi Malik Siah telegraph extension, I agreed to allow the Urmi Mollah to return home, provided that no further opposition was offered by the Persian Government to the posting of British signallers at Birjand and Turbat-i-Haideri, on the Meshed-Seistan telegraph line.

I have the honour to inclose correspondence on the subject with the Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

His Excellency informed me verbally that if the negotiations now in progress for the withdrawal of the Russian signallers proved successful, the Persian Government would expect His Majesty's Government to remove any British signallers working on the line. I confined myself to stating that I would report what his Excellency had said to you, and to reminding him that on the 19th November, 1904, I had, by Lord Lansdowne's instructions, addressed a note to the Persian Government, stating that, if the Russian signallers were allowed on the line, His Majesty's Government would demand an equal number of British signallers. I notice that in the Mushir-ed-Dowleh's communication of the 16th February, translation of which is inclosed, no mention is made of any condition.

On obtaining the Mushir-ed-Dowleh's promise with regard to the admission of our signallers at Birjand and Turbat, I at once instructed His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Tabreez that His Majesty's Government withdrew any further opposition to the return of the Mollah to Urmi, and requested him to inform the Valiahd in that sense.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 213.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

January 19, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that the two British signallers destined for Birjand and Turbat-i-Haideri have arrived at Nasratabad (Seistan), and are proceeding to their posts.

I request your Excellency to be so good as to send the necessary instructions to the Telegraph authorities at the above-mentioned places to admit the signallers to the telegraph offices.

I applied to the Minister of Telegraphs in the above sense on the 23rd ultimo, but his Excellency stated that he could not give the necessary permission without your authorization.

Inclosure 2 in No. 213.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

February 16, 1906.

I HAVE received your note respecting the English telegraph signallers who are proceeding to Birjand and Turbat-i-Haideri, and at your request the Ministry of Telegraphs has been requested in writing to instruct the Telegraph authorities in the above-mentioned places not to prevent the said signallers from entering the telegraph offices for the purpose of sending messages of British subjects.

[9421]

No. 214.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 47.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 27, 1906.

ON receipt of your telegram No. 20 of the 30th ultimo, I verbally informed the Mushir-ed-Dowleh that, unless the Persian Government could see their way to hold the inquiry at Urmi into the Labaree murder at an early date, I intended to instruct Mr. Wratislaw to return to Tabreez. His Excellency earnestly begged me to wait a short time longer, and in order not to give the Persian Government the slightest excuse for evading their obligations, I consented to delay telegraphing to Mr. Wratislaw for another week. At the end of that time the Mushir-ed-Dowleh definitely informed me that nothing could at present be done to force the Kurds to appear at the inquiry, and I instructed Mr. Wratislaw on the 9th instant to return to Tabreez.

As I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 45 of the 13th instant, the United States' Minister informed me that the Persian Government had instructed their Representative at Washington to ask for a further delay of ten months before the murderers are punished. Mr. Pearson requested my opinion regarding this proposal. I replied that I thought the case would in all probability be in the same unsatisfactory position at the end of the specified time, and recommended that if the United States' Government consented to wait, very stringent conditions should be made.

I have the honour to inclose Mr. Pearson's telegram to the State Department.

The very unsatisfactory termination of this phase of the case is, in my opinion, greatly due to Mr. Pearson's total incapacity to understand the Persian character or the ways of this Government. I think it unlikely that the murderers will ever be brought to justice unless the United States' Government have recourse to threats, without which they would never even have obtained the compensation paid to Mr. Labaree's widow in December 1904.

I transmit herewith further correspondence regarding the case, and await your instructions as to what further steps, if any, I am to take regarding the attack on Captain Gough.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 214.

*Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 1.)

Sir,

Urmi, January 20, 1906.

WITH reference to my telegrams Nos. 1, 5, and 6, I have the honour to report that Imam Kuli Mirza seems to have made up his mind that he is to leave Urmi for Ardebil, and he has even sent off some camel loads of luggage in advance to his country seat near Maragha. He is very averse to the transfer, because he cannot take his underun with him to Ardebil, and for other personal reasons he much prefers Urmi; but the new appointment does not seem in any way a disgrace. Ardebil is a lucrative and important post where, since the beginning of the existing anarchy in the Caucasus and the consequent impotence of the authorities on the other side of the Russian frontier, the powerful Shaseven tribe has been causing considerable anxiety, and a strong and capable Governor is urgently needed.

Some weeks ago the Valiahd proposed to send a creature of his own, Vekil-ul-Mulk, as Governor of Urmi, but his suggestion was overruled, and a protégé of Mushir-ed-

[9425]

No. 217.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 51.)

Sir,

*Tehran, February 27, 1906.*

WITH reference to your telegram No. 28 of the 9th instant, I have the honour to forward herewith a copy of the note which I addressed to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, regarding the claim of the Persian Government to the sovereignty of Bahrein.

The delay which occurred in carrying out your instructions was owing to the fact that the Mushir-ed-Dowleh's telegram to the Persian community at Bahrein was not in the archives of His Majesty's Legation, and had to be obtained from Bushire.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 217.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.**February 19, 1906.*

I LOST no time in bringing to the notice of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the purport of your Excellency's note of the 9th January last, regarding the claims of the Persian Government to sovereignty over Bahrein.

I have the honour to inform you that I have received instructions from Sir E. Grey to reply to your Excellency's communication in the following terms:—

The Treaties of 1809, 1814, and 1857 on the subject have always been scrupulously observed by His Majesty's Government, but have no bearing on the present question. His Majesty's Government have never admitted the ownership or sovereignty of Persia over Bahrein, and such a claim is, in their view, entirely inadmissible. His Majesty's Government consider the Island of Bahrein and its inhabitants to be under British protection, and must decline to entertain any further representations on the subject. I am further to mention that this reply has invariably been made to the Ottoman Government, who have on several occasions advanced a claim to Bahrein.

Sir E. Grey instructs me to remind your Excellency of the action taken by the British authorities in November 1904 for the protection of Persian traders at Bahrein, and of your telegram forwarded on that occasion to the Persian community, of which the following is the purport:—

"To the merchants and traders of the High Government living in Bahrein. Your telegram, on the subject of the assaults which have been made upon you by the Arab roughs of Bahrein, has been received. Certainly let your minds be at rest. Consultations with the British Legation have taken place on this subject, and it will shortly be settled in such a way that the oppression will be removed and that offenders will receive their proper punishment."

In conclusion, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that His Majesty's Government must maintain their right to use their good offices on behalf of Bahreinese in Persia.

[9426]

No. 218.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 52.)

Sir,

*Tehran, February 27, 1906.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 55 of the 24th instant, I have the honour to forward herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul in Seistan, regarding the proceedings of the Sanitary Council of Seistan.

From the inclosure to Captain Macpherson's despatch it would appear certain that the Russian Consulate in Seistan are trying to use the plague epidemic to obtain political advantages. In these circumstances I ventured in my telegram No. 55 to

suggest the possibility of asking the Russian Government to instruct their officials at Nasretabad, to modify their attitude at least during the continuance of the epidemic. Failing this I am disposed to concur in the view taken by the Government of India, that an attempt should be made to induce the Persian Government to abolish the Sanitary Council, and to confer full powers on the Director of Customs, and the Itisham-ul-Vazareh, the Frontier Officer of the Province, with liberty to consult the British and Russian doctors on purely medical questions.

It is, however, by no means unlikely that the Persian Government would view any such proposal emanating from us with suspicion, and the Imperial Sanitary Council sitting there might object to the abolition of the Seistan Council, and so advise the Grand Vizier.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 218.

*Consul Macpherson to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 3. Confidential.)

Sir,

*Seistan, January 27, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your information, copy of letter No. 41 c of to-day's date, inclosing a note on the proceedings of the Sanitary Council of Seistan, which I have addressed to the Government of India.

Copies of this letter and inclosure have been forwarded to the Agent to the Governor-General in Baluchistan, His Majesty's Consul-General for Khorassan, and His Majesty's Consul at Turbat-i-Haidri.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) A. D. MACPHERSON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 218.

*Consul Macpherson to Government of India.*

(Confidential.)

Sir,

*Seistan, January 27, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your information, a note on the meeting of the 24th instant, of the Sanitary Council of Seistan, as it now styles itself.

2. I have considered it advisable to report very fully on this meeting in order to make clear the manner in which the Russian Consulate is attempting to profit by the outbreak of plague, and the fact of their having the only European doctor in Seistan. Another instance of this tendency is described in my note for the 21st instant, forwarded to you under cover of my letter No. 29 c of the 23rd January.

3. This letter should reach Calcutta and Tehran, a sufficient number of days before the arrival in Seistan of the British doctor, who is being sent up by the Government of India, to admit of an exchange of views by telegraph between the Government of India and His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, as to the line of action to be adopted on his arrival.

4. I would propose the following two alternatives for the consideration of the Government of India.

In the event of Russian intrigue failing to develop to an extent materially injurious to our interests, I would suggest that the Persian Government be advised that the Government of India, having full confidence in the ability of M. Molitor, and the Itisham-ul-Nazara—who are working in perfect harmony—to carry out all measures necessary to insure the stamping out of the disease, and prevent its spread to British Baluchistan and other provinces of Persia, propose that the Sanitary Council be dissolved, and that full powers be conferred on M. Molitor and the Itisham-ul-Nazara, with liberty to consult the British and Russian doctors on purely medical questions, whenever they may consider it advisable.

I may mention here that the Persian Government is sending down two Persian doctors for service on the Sanitary Council.

As the putting into force of the above proposals could be made by the Russians to appear as if Captain Keyes had been removed from the Sanitary Council, it would



be advisable that the purely consultative nature of the doctors' functions should be very clearly laid down in the orders dissolving it, so that there may remain no doubt as to the orders being in the spirit of the proposal made at the meeting of the 24th by Captain Keyes, of which a full translation is given in the text.

In the event of Russian intrigue becoming so flagrant as to demand more pronounced action on our part, it would appear advisable to demand the removal of Dr. Zaplotynski from the Sanitary Council on the grounds of his persistent efforts to gain political advantage from his position, and the burden imposed thereby on the already over-worked executive staff of the Council.

The action of the Russian Government in connection with the Turbat-i-Haidri cordon would appear to justify our taking this step if it unfortunately becomes necessary to safeguard our interests.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. D. MACPHERSON, *Captain,*  
*His Britannic Majesty's Consul for Seistan and Kain.*

Inclosure 3 in No. 218.

*Meeting of the Sanitary Council of Seistan on January 24, 1906.*

NINE A.M. was the time fixed for the commencement of this meeting. Dr. Zaplotynski arrived at 9.30, the Itisham-ul-Nazara and the Sifwat-us-Sultana at 10.15; the Mustofi, having been sent for, arrived at 10.45.

*Reports.*—The Minutes of the last meeting having been read, all the Reports received in the meantime were laid before the meeting. The substance of these is as follows:—

1. No cases of plague have been reported from any new village.
2. No villages outside the Sheb-i-Ab cordon are infected, with the exception of Deh Iza, which, being near the city, is very carefully watched, and the Ark (*vide* last note).
3. The Headman of the Sayyads reports that no encampments of "gaodars" (graziers) have been attacked, and that the gaodars themselves have instituted their own cordons against the encampments of Sayyads.
4. In a "khal" behind Deh Hussein Saba six or seven are dying every day.
5. Fifteen villages and encampments round Kachian were found to be free of plague by Hospital Assistant Sheikh Ahmed.
6. In Tesha Khani, an encampment of 400 souls on the shores of the Hamun-i-Sahari, Sheikh Ahmed found that ten people had died of plague about a fortnight ago. The people, without instructions, threw their huts into the Hamun and burnt the rest of their effects. As the two first to be seized in this village contracted the disease immediately after returning from a funeral, the Sayyads determined to attend no more funerals.
7. In Khel-i-Sayyadan five cases, originally concealed, were discovered by Sheikh Ahmed.
8. Sheikh Ahmed reports that some of the encampments were in a very bad way, as the grain which is being sent out by M. Molitor has not arrived, and the fish, on which they largely rely, are lying at the bottom of the water on account of the cold.
9. It was estimated that the daily mortality among the Sayyads, who number some 2,000 souls, is about ten.

*Russian Jealousy.*—The Itisham-ul-Nazara, M. Molitor, and the Sifwat-us-Sultana expressed their gratitude to Sheikh Ahmed for his excellent reports. It is interesting to note in this connection that Dr. Zaplotynski had previously protested to M. Molitor against Sheikh Ahmed's being sent out without the Council's being consulted. M. Molitor replied that he had not asked the approval of the Council before requesting Dr. Zaplotynski to examine a case at Deh Saftar. On this occasion Dr. Zaplotynski, who was attending an urgent case amongst the Russian subjects, instead of informing M. Molitor that he could not go to the village, so that the latter could have asked the Sheikh to examine the case for him, sent his dresser.

*Telegraphic Instructions from Tehran.*—M. Molitor then read a telegram from the Administrator-General reducing the period of detention at Sandan to five days, and

informing him that the Government had decided that the subscription which it was proposed to institute was unnecessary.

*Proposal to limit Meetings.*—Captain Kayes then laid the following, in French and Persian, before the meeting:—

"It seems that the consultative nature of this Committee has been to a certain extent lost sight of, and its lengthy sittings have become rather a burden than an aid to the Itisham-ul-Nazara, M. Molitor, and their assistants, who are so capably carrying out the duty which has been confided in them by the Persian Government. To obviate as much as possible this undesirable result I would propose that the Committee only meet once a week, and that those members who wish to submit a proposition circulate it, if possible, the day before a meeting, in French and Persian, through the good offices of M. Molitor. To avoid delays at the beginning of the sittings, I propose that members send their watches, the day of meeting, to be regulated by M. Molitor's watch."

M. Molitor, before the meeting, had heartily approved of this Resolution, and on its being read out the Itisham-ul-Nazara also approved. Dr. Zaplotynski protested vehemently, and it was finally decided to cut the meetings down to one hour and a-half, and meet only twice a-week.

The above Resolution seemed necessary for the following reasons: the meetings have always taken from four to five hours, and as the preparation of the proceedings take M. Molitor and his sole remaining mirza, who has also to do all the Customs work, some hours more, the real duties of the executive officials, such as the rationing of isolated villages, receiving reports, and issuing instructions, suffer considerably. The benefits to be placed on the other side of the account are hardly commensurate; they consist of the interminable discourses of Dr. Zaplotynski, who from the first has shown himself nervous and impracticable, and to this now adds persistent efforts to gain political advantage from his position.

Fortunately, this Consulate is on excellent terms with M. Molitor, who has shown himself throughout most tactful and impartial, and has now telegraphed to Tehran protesting against the manner in which Dr. Zaplotynski introduces politics into the matter in order to draw attention on himself and get into the Russian Consular service, for which, as he confided in M. Molitor, he is studying.

*Instances of Russian Intrigue.*—Two characteristic instances of this propensity of Dr. Zaplotynski's occurred during to-day's meeting.

M. Molitor read a rather loosely-worded telegram from the Director-General of Posts in Meshed, ordering him to send the post to Meshed only once a-week during the prevalence of plague, and select a route avoiding the infected area. The Director-General called the postal line "the Koh-i-malik Siah-Nasratabad-Turbat post," and Dr. Zaplotynski, taking advantage of this slip, demanded that this treatment should also be applied to the Indian post from Koh-i-Malik Siah to the city, although it does not pass through the infected area, and that the case of the Consular post, which follows the same route, should also be considered.

On M. Molitor's declining to do either, Dr. Zaplotynski said that he would bring the matter up at the next meeting.

The second instance was as follows:—

Dr. Zaplotynski offered the services of his "feldsher" (dresser), who, he says, has a diploma for the quarantine at Lab-i-Baring, and stated that if Abbas Ali's services were accepted for the post at Sandan, he (Abbas Ali) should be transferred to Lab-i-Baring, as the less important place, on the arrival of a Russian doctor from Turbat-i-Haidari.

M. Molitor replied that he thought one station to the north of the Hamun was sufficient, when the Sifwat-us-Sultana, who had obviously been put up to it, appealed to the Itisham to give his opinion whether the Resolution passed at the first general Conference could be altered in which it had been decided (as they said) that a Russian doctor should go to Sandan and a British doctor to Lab-i-Baring. The Itisham said that it certainly could not be altered; but on their being reminded that Captain Macpherson's suggestion to take the mollahs into our confidence had been accepted by the general meeting and cancelled by the Sub-Committee, and that, although the general meeting had originally adopted a unanimous Resolution to telegraph to Tehran that, in their opinion, quarantine against British Baluchistan was unnecessary, Dr. Zaplotynski had subsequently re-raised the question, the matter was dropped.

(Signed) A. D. MACPHERSON, *Captain.*



[9427]

No. 219.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 53.)

Sir,

*Tehran, February 27, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a Report on events in Persia in 1905.

Those portions dealing with "concessions" and "roads" have been drawn up by Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas, Military Attaché to this Legation, while the remainder of the Report is the work of Mr. Kidston.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

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Inclosure in No. 219.

*Report on the Events in Persia in 1905.*

THE principal Departments of the Persian Government were under the following Ministers:—

President of the Council of  
Ministers. . . . . Ain-ed-Dowleh.

(His Highness, who was last year raised to the rank of Sadr Azam, was, on the return of the Shah from Europe, promoted to that of Atabeg-i-Azam, the highest title in the Shah's gift.)

Minister of Foreign Affairs . . . Mushir-ed-Dowleh.  
Minister of War . . . . . Sipah Salar.

(The Sipah Salar died in January 1905, and no successor has been appointed, the command of the forces being partitioned out to various Generals, while the Grand Vizier keeps the central control in his own hands. The Naib-es-Sultaneh, the Shah's brother, was appointed Minister of War, February 1906.)

Minister of Customs. . . . . M. Naus.  
Minister of Posts . . . . . M. Naus.  
Minister of Telegraphs . . . . . Mukhber-ed-Dowleh.  
Minister of Commerce . . . . . Saad-ed-Dowleh.  
Minister of Justice . . . . . Nizam-ul-Mulk.  
Minister of Public Works . . . . . Mohandes-ul-Mamalek.  
Minister of the Court . . . . . Amir Bahadur Jang.

The principal Governorships were held by the following persons:—

Azerbaijan . . . . . His Imperial Highness the Valiahd.

(The Nizam-es-Sultaneh acted as Governor during the Prince's Regency at Tehran.)

Khorassan . . . . . Asaf-ud-Dowleh.  
Fars . . . . . His Imperial Highness Shoa-es-Sultaneh.  
Ispahan . . . . . His Imperial Highness Zil-es-Sultan.  
Kerman . . . . . Rukh-ed-Dowleh, and afterwards Zaf-es-Sultaneh.  
Yezd . . . . . Moayyed-ed-Dowleh.  
Luristan and Kermanshah . . . . . Firman Firma.  
Tehran . . . . . The Grand Vizier, and afterwards Ala-ed-Dowleh.  
Kurdistan . . . . . Salar-ed-Dowleh.  
Ghilan . . . . . Azad-es-Sultan.

*Persia in 1905.*

The two chief governing factors of the political life of Persia in 1905 have been the effect produced by recent events in Russia and the emptiness of the Treasury.

The victories of Japan and the subsequent revolutionary troubles in Russia have not only put the entire Persian question on a totally different footing, but have raised new social, political, and religious questions in the country itself. The Persians are showing a new restlessness, a new impatience of the bad Government which they formerly seemed to accept so philosophically, and a general resentment of the present state of things, which, although still tentative, and only groping for expression in futile and often childish ways, may be traced all over the country and in every department of public life. (See under "Disturbances in Persia.")

The general upset in Russia has had greater material effect upon this country than perhaps on any other. The whole trade of North Persia has been dislocated and thrown into confusion. Transport, when not altogether interrupted, has been uncertain and risky; the usual markets for Persian goods have either been altogether cut off, or have been so shaky as to be hardly worth cultivating. The import trade, on which North Persia practically clothes itself, and depends for all except the absolute necessities of life, has been destroyed by the failure of Russian firms or the shutting down of factories.

It is probable that the full effect of the commercial confusion existing in Russia has not yet been felt here, for the store of goods imported and held in reserve has not yet been exhausted, but prices of many commodities, notably sugar, are rising rapidly, and the outlook is not encouraging.

The victories of the Japanese have undoubtedly diminished the prestige of all Europeans among the Persians, who only know that the Japanese are fellow-Orientals, and are quite ignorant of the immense gulf separating the national characters of the two peoples.

The massacres of Moslems by Armenians at Baku and elsewhere in the Caucasus caused great anxiety to the Persian Government during the summer. It was feared that the influx of Moslem refugees would rouse the fanatical spirit of the people in the great religious centres and lead to a general anti-Christian movement. With the exception of some unrest at Tabreez and Meshed, these fears have happily not so far been fulfilled.

The risk of disturbances in North Persia is largely increased by the collapse of Russia, for the knowledge that any serious outbreak would instantly be followed by a Russian occupation acted as a wholesome check on turbulent spirits.

From the point of view of the Persian Government, perhaps the most serious aspect of the situation brought about by Russia's difficulties is that it has upset the nice balance of the machinery which the Shah has for so long been accustomed to set in motion when in need of supplies. The persistent loan negotiations of the year are eloquent testimony of this. (See under "Persian Loan Negotiations.")

The pretensions of the Persian Government, however, have not abated in proportion as their difficulties have increased, and the patience of those foreign Representatives who have had business relations with them in 1905 has been so tried by their obstructive methods that the necessity for some form of joint action has been freely discussed.

Russia has been shown the difference that the events of the last two years have made in her position by the refusal of the Persian Government to pay any compensation for the damage done to her subjects in the riots of Moharrem at Meshed, by the destruction by a mob of the new Russian Bank building in the Tehran bazaar, and by an independent tone in correspondence with the Legation which the Persian Foreign Office would scarcely have ventured to adopt a few years ago. (See Sir A. Hardinge's despatch No. 165, Confidential, of the 29th July, 1905.)

The Turks, besides the frontier dispute at Vazneh, which at one time threatened to result in an armed conflict, and is still by no means destitute of danger, have a long list of outstanding claims, and the Embassy complain bitterly that they can do nothing owing to the inadequate support which they receive from the Porte.

The French are equally discontented, and their Representative has exchanged some sharply-worded correspondence with the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, and on more than one occasion threatened direct application to the Shah.

The Americans are disgusted by the bad faith and obstruction shown them in the matter of the Urmi murder case. (See under "Attacks on Foreigners.")

In fact, the chorus of complaint is general.

The present Grand Vizier is credited with a profound contempt for everything foreign, and with a childish, but comfortable, conviction that Persia is unassailable, and that the ragged and starved Persian troops are capable of resisting any forces in the world. The peculiarly Persian temperament of this gentleman may be judged from the fact that, on his recent journey to Europe with the Shah, having been stared at somewhat curiously at Lemberg, he never again, during the whole of his travels, ventured outside the hotels where he stayed, save on those occasions when he was forced to make an official appearance.

The Court party say openly that Japan has shown the Western world what Orientals can do, and the victories of the Japanese have undoubtedly raised in Persian minds a quite exaggerated idea of their own capabilities.

In May the Shah set out for Europe with the Grand Vizier, and the Valiahd was left as Regent at Tehran. The latter, during his tenure of office, was assiduously cultivated by the Russians. They advanced a small loan to him without political conditions (see under "Persian Loan Negotiations"), and in September the Czar made him a Knight of St. Andrew. In return for these blandishments he showed them favour in several small matters, but his Regency was not marked by any startling novelty, and he was probably either given very little power or was too prudent to use it, for all questions of any importance arising during his Regency were either referred to the Grand Vizier in Europe or shelved till the Shah's return.

The only real activity displayed by the Persian Government in 1905 has been in their constant attempts to raise a loan. (See under "Persian Loan Negotiations.")

Nothing has been done to improve the condition of the country or to quiet the disturbed regions, and the influence of the revolutionary movement in Russia can be distinctly traced in such outbreaks as have occurred in Tehran and at Shiraz. (See under "Disturbances in Persia.")

A summary of the principal events which have come under the notice of His Majesty's Legation in 1905 will be found in the following pages:—

They are arranged, for convenience sake, under the following headings:—

- I. Agreements between His Majesty's Government and the Persian Government and Arbitration Awards.
- II. Customs and Posts.
- III. Persian Loan Negotiations.
- IV. Telegraphs.
- V. Attacks on Foreigners.
- VI. Disturbances in Persia.
- VII. Concessions.
- VIII. Roads.
- IX. Miscellaneous.
- X. Rumours of 1905.
- XI. Russian activity in Persia in 1905.
- XII. Government of India's complaint as to "unfriendly acts" on the part of the Persian Government.

# I.—AGREEMENTS BETWEEN HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AND PERSIAN GOVERNMENT AND ARBITRATION AWARDS.

- (A.) Perso-Beluch Frontier or Mirjawar Agreement.
- (B.) Henjam-Bunder Abbas Telegraph Extension Agreement.
- (C.) Seistan Water Award.

## (A.) Perso-Beluch Frontier or Mirjawar Agreement.

In 1902 the Persians established a custom-house at Mirjawar, a place which was alleged to be on the British side of the frontier, as laid down by the Holdich Agreement, but it was found, on examination, that our claim was doubtful, and that any hard and fast delimitation of the frontier in accordance with the Holdich Agreement would raise awkward questions as to the ownership of other points actually held by us. Sir A. Hardinge was accordingly authorized to give up our claim to Mirjawar in consideration of certain concessions on the part of Persia.

By the Agreement, signed on the 13th May, 1905, the British claim to Mirjawar is withdrawn, but permission is given to the British outpost at Padaha to draw its water from that place. The further examination of the frontier line in this district by a Special Commission is abandoned, and the frontier is declared to be definitely settled in accordance with the Holdich Agreement of 1896, no further claim to be made in respect of it.

The Persian Government so far relax the embargo on grain as to allow the inhabitants of certain frontier villages to export supplies to a specified amount for the British frontier station at Robat and for the Nushki route.

## (B.) Henjam-Bunder Abbas Telegraph Extension Agreement.

This Agreement was signed on the 13th May, 1905. By its provisions His Majesty's Government authorize the Indo-European Telegraph Department to provide the engineers and materials for the construction of the line on behalf of the Persian Government, at a cost not exceeding 75,000 rupees. The line to pass across the Island of Kishm and, as soon as paid for, to be handed over to the Persian Ministry of Telegraphs.

Provision is made for a Persian office at Henjam (a point on which the Shah insisted) for the appointment of Persian telegraphists there, and for the passage of all messages for abroad from Bunder Abbas through this Persian office.

The Persian Government undertake not to employ foreign subjects in the working of the line, but with the reservation that this shall not preclude them from employing, for its repair and maintenance, foreigners in the service of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, nor from allowing a British signaller to be stationed at Bunder Abbas to deal with State messages to and from the Consulate, should His Majesty's Government desire it.

The laying of the line was completed in October, and in January 1906 the Persian Government requested that they might be furnished with the account, which they stated that they were prepared to settle.

Meanwhile there are disputes at both ends of the line as to the receiving offices. At Bunder Abbas the Persian Government, though constantly urged to do so, have so far failed to take any steps for the construction of a telegraph office, and have by a show of force resisted the temporary lodging of the cable end in the ground selected for the future British Consulate.

At Henjam the question of the site of the Persian office is complicated by the view taken by the Persian Government as to the ownership of the ground on which the already existing British office is built. (See under "Customs.")

## (C.) Seistan Water Award.

Colonel McMahon delivered his Award on the Seistan water question in April.

The preamble, after a brief historical summary of the events necessitating arbitration, and as assurance that the present Award is based on Sir F. Goldsmid's Award of 1872, and is merely intended to adapt to altered circumstances the principle

laid down in that Award, that Persia has a right to a requisite supply of water for irrigation, declares that, after exhaustive inquiries, it has been ascertained that one-third of the water of the Helmund reaching Seistan at Bandar-i-Kamal will amply suffice for the proper irrigation of all existing cultivation in Persian Seistan.

The Award itself permits the construction of new canals on either side, provided the supply of water requisite for irrigation is not thereby diminished; defines the amount of this supply due to Persia as one-third of the volume of the Helmund at the point where it enters Seistan; and provides that a British irrigation officer be permanently attached to His Majesty's Consulate in Seistan to act as Arbitrator in water disputes, and generally supervise the arrangement of matters in connection with the Award. Provision is made to insure that the principle of the Award should not be transgressed in the event of its being found necessary to move either the Band-i-Kohak or the Shahgul Band, and it is declared that Persia shall not be at liberty to alienate the water rights acquired under the Award to any other Power without the consent of Afghanistan.

The Amcer of Afghanistan expressed satisfaction with the Award, but asked for explanations as to the appointment of a British irrigation officer, which he considered unnecessary.

The Shah, on the other hand, telegraphed from Europe that he would not accept the Award, alleging that the people of Seistan were discontented with the share of water allotted to them.

This refusal of the Persian Government to accept the result of the arbitration which they themselves invited is doubtless largely due to the vigorous intrigues which the Russians have ceaselessly carried on against Colonel McMahon's Mission and the whole principle of British arbitration in South-East Persia. Besides lying reports spread locally among an ignorant and suspicious population as to the ulterior motives of the Mission, attempts to organize local anti-British disturbances, and a vigorous campaign in the native press by Russian officials, the Russian Minister even went so far as to address the Valiahd on the subject, declaring that the Award defrauded Persia of her just rights, that it would drive Persian subjects to cross over into Afghanistan, that the Irrigation Officer would merely act as a spy and undermine Persian authority, and that the Yamin-i-Nizam, the Persian Commissioner, had sold his country for English gold.

Not content with refusing to accept the Award, the Persians entered into direct communication with the Afghans, informed them that the Award was inoperative, since they refused to accept it, and that the water question therefore reverted to the *status quo ante* under the provisions of the original Goldsmid Award. Acting under instructions from His Majesty's Government, Mr. Grant Duff addressed a strong note to the Persian Government, stating that we could not allow one of the parties to notify to the other its intention to disregard the Award, pointing out that the proper course was to lodge an appeal through His Majesty's Legation, that such an appeal would receive every attention, but that if it were not presented within a reasonable period His Majesty's Government would consider the Award as final, and take effective measures to render it operative. This note was sent in on the 2nd December, but so far (23rd February, 1906) no reply had been received to it.

The Persian Government has sent the Itisham-ul-Vazareh as special Commissioner to investigate on the spot.

On the departure of the Mission for India, the mud huts which they had occupied at Kuhak were left standing, and the Russians promptly availed themselves of the fact to spread reports in the district to the effect that the English were coming back again to occupy the country. Rumours of an impending invasion became so categorical that the Persian Government got news that an expedition had actually started from Quetta, and sent to His Majesty's Legation to ask for an explanation. Eventually, in view of the representations of the Persian Government, it was decided to destroy the buildings, in consideration of a written engagement on the part of the Persians that they would re-erect them if necessary. Before the receipt of the written communication, however, and before any agreement had been reached as to the method or formalities to be observed in connection with their destruction, the Yamin-i-Nizam, without even informing His Majesty's Consul of his intention, caused them to be burnt to the ground. His Majesty's Government subsequently accepted a formal apology for this incident, tendered to His Majesty's Consul by the Deputy Governor and the Yamin-i-Nizam in uniform.

## II.—CUSTOMS AND POSTS.

- (A.) Agitation against Belgian Customs Administration.
- (B.) Assafoetida Case.
- (C.) Jask Guard and Customs Duties.
- (D.) Hamalbashi Question.
- (E.) Medical Officers attached to Foreign Missions and their payment of Customs dues.
- (F.) "Droits de Chancellerie."
- (G.) Persian Gulf Post-offices.

### (A.) Agitation against Belgian Customs Administration.

Throughout the year there have been evidences of a determined agitation against M. Naus personally, and against the Belgian Customs Administration in general. The leading spirits in the movement are the Mollahs (especially Seyid Abdullah), the Saad-ed-Dowleh, Minister of Commerce (since dismissed, February 1906), and the Nizam-es-Sultaneh, who is said to desire the Ministry of Customs for himself.

M. Naus is freely charged with peculation, and in the beginning of the year a weapon was afforded to his enemies by the fact that, having on one occasion gone to a fancy-dress ball in the costume of a Mollah, he was foolish enough to have himself photographed in the costume. His enemies were not slow to seize the opportunity. He was accused of deliberately insulting the Shiah faith. Copies of the photograph were sent to the clergy all over Persia, and to Nejef and Kerbela, and leaflets were distributed inciting the faithful to make away with the blasphemer. So serious did the agitation become that M. Naus offered to resign his office, but he was persuaded by the Shah to retain it.

During the month of Moharrem the Russian Legation became seriously disturbed by the violence of the movement, and, in alarm for the security for their loans should the customs pass out of European control, addressed a strong note to the Persian Government threatening that in such an event they would have "to take measures." This was interpreted by the Persians as a hint at Russian control, and was much resented.

On the eve of the Shah's departure for Europe, the merchants followed the example set them by the clergy, closed their shops and proceeded in a body to the shrine of Shah Abdul Azim outside the city, as a protest against the Customs Administration. Here they remained for nearly a fortnight, much to the annoyance of the Shah, who feared that his European journey might have to be postponed. Eventually, after much negotiation, they consented to accept an arrangement by which Government Representatives were to be appointed to the frontier customs stations to supervise the application of the Customs Regulations.

During the Shah's absence the agitation slumbered, and in the beginning of October M. Naus left for Constantinople to negotiate a Commercial Treaty with Turkey, and the administration of the customs during his absence was intrusted to M. Priem, formerly Director of Customs at Tabreez.

In December a movement of a wider scope against the Grand Vizier and the present Government broke out, and the leading Mollahs betook themselves to the shrine of Shah Abdul Azim. Among the demands which they formulated was a change in the administration of the customs, and before they could be induced to return a promise was given by the Shah that changes would be made, though their nature was apparently left for future discussion. (See under "Tehran Disturbances.")

Besides the charges of peculation on a very large scale brought against M. Naus and his staff, other grievances are the employment of large numbers of Armenians by the Customs, and the vexatious manner in which the Regulations are enforced.

There is much speculation in Tehran as to whether M. Naus will return. He openly stated, before leaving, that he would resign, and seek employment in his own country, should the agitation against him continue—and it certainly shows no sign of abating. On the other hand, his wife and family are still here.

*Customs Questions.*—Relations of British officials with the Belgian Customs during 1905 have for the most part been good. The Belgians seem to have shown a more conciliatory spirit, and to have carried out their duties in a less vexatious manner than formerly.



(B.) *Assafetida Case.*

This was a case in which certain Afghan merchants were accused by the Customs authorities at Meshed of smuggling assafetida across the Afghan frontier. Their camels and stock were seized, and they were condemned to pay a very large fine, the maximum penalty being imposed on each member of the caravan.

The case led to a very voluminous correspondence, and, after examination on the spot, the Customs finally discovered that they had no case and remitted the fine.

The question as to compensation for the detention of the camels and assafetida still remains to be settled, the Customs Administration and the Legation differing as to the interpretation of the Article of the "Règlement Légal" which makes provision for this.

The case may eventually have to be referred to His Majesty's Government.

(C.) *Jask Guard and Customs Duties.*

The Government of India claim that the Jask Guard enjoy exemption from the payment of customs dues by the terms of the Jask Agreement, which stipulates that the employés and servants of the Telegraph be entitled to this privilege. This point of view has been represented to the Customs Department on more than one occasion in 1905, and the question has been bandied to and fro between the Customs and the Persian Foreign Office, with the result that the Persian Government have at length declared that they do not admit that the Jask Guard can be included in the categories enumerated in the Jask Agreement as entitled to customs exemption, and refuse to grant them this privilege.

(D.) *Hamalbashi Question.*

Mr. Grant Duff has represented to the Customs Administration the long-standing grievance of the defective arrangements provided in the southern ports for the transfer of goods from incoming vessels to the Custom-house. At present the Customs, while controlling the appointment of the contractor who handles the goods ("hamalbashi"), refuse all responsibility for losses in transit. Mr. Grant Duff has suggested that the Customs should either undertake the discharge of cargo themselves or be responsible for the "hamalbashi." Further suggestions deal with the reduction of the exorbitant fees at present charged for portage, and the provision of proper accommodation in the Customs go-downs.

These suggestions are still under consideration.

(E.) *Question of Payment of Customs dues by Medical Officers attached to Legations and Consulates.*

The Customs Administration has refused to extend the privilege of exemption from customs duties to the medical men attached to foreign Missions, on the plea that they earn large fees in the country by private practice.

(F.) *"Droits de Chancellerie."*

The attempt of the Customs Administration to charge "droits de Chancellerie" and other office fees on goods imported by persons enjoying exemption from the payment of customs dues has been tacitly abandoned.

*Henjam.*—At Henjam the Persian Government have insisted on their right to construct a custom-house within the area occupied by the Indo-European Telegraph Department, and have asserted that as the original Concession only gave the British the right to erect buildings, and did not specifically convey land to them or define the boundaries of the site, they have a perfect right to do so. This is objected to (1) on sanitary grounds; (2) on account of the scarcity of water and the large sums expended by the Department to procure an adequate supply for themselves; and (3) for fear of interference with the Lloyd's signalling station which it is proposed to

erect on the island. The question is, moreover, complicated by the anti-Persian sentiments of the Arab population, who have never acknowledged Persian sovereignty and are much excited by the establishment of the Persian custom-house.

(G.) *Persian Gulf Post-offices.*

The question of the status of the British post-offices in the Persian Gulf was raised in December 1904 by the seizure of the mail-bags from the steamer "Kasara" by the Customs officials at Bushire. The Customs claimed that by Articles 27 and 51 of the "Règlement Légal" they were acting within their rights, while His Majesty's Representative claimed that the British post-offices in the Gulf are entirely outside the scope of the "Règlement," as their existence does not depend on any Commercial Treaty, but on a separate Agreement with the Persian Government, and that any modification of the actual procedure in regard to them must be made the subject of another special Agreement with the Persian Government.

A temporary compromise was agreed upon, by which the mail-bags are opened in the presence of a representative of the Customs; and in June Sir A. Hardinge was authorized to conclude an Arrangement with the Persian Government for the treatment of the mails on the same lines as in the Ottoman dominions.

All the papers were left with M. Naus in July, but, beyond expressing a personal and verbal opinion that there would be no objection to the proposed Arrangement, he took no further steps in the matter, and in October left for Europe.

It is expected that he will raise the whole question of the status of the British post-offices on the Persian Gulf at the forthcoming Postal Conference at Rome, which he is to attend on behalf of the Persian Government.

## III.—PERSIAN LOAN NEGOTIATIONS IN 1905.

Owing to the cholera in the summer of 1904, the Russo-Japanese war, the subsequent internal troubles in Russia, and the consequent dislocation of northern trade, Persian finances at the beginning of 1905 were at a very low ebb indeed. Financial embarrassment was heightened by the Shah's determination to undertake a European tour, and the necessity of raising funds for that object.

The following is a brief record of the various attempts made during the year to replenish the Imperial coffers:—

1. In February, as a result of overtures made by the Persian Minister at St. Petersburg, the Russian Government stated that they were prepared to advance a sum of 350,000*l.* on condition that the reorganization of the Persian army, which it was at that time proposed to undertake with the assistance of Austrian officers, should be placed instead under Russian supervision. The scheme practically amounted to the extension to the whole Persian army of an organization similar to that of the present Cossack Brigade. The Shah declined to accept such a condition, and the offer of the loan was withdrawn. On the Shah's refusal the Russian Bank put on the screw by demanding the immediate settlement of arrears on debts on account current contracted by the late Grand Vizier. The sum for the immediate payment of which pressure was brought to bear amounted to 84,000*l.*, but the Persian Government were unable to raise it, and in May the Russian Bank agreed to defer settlement. The scheme for gaining control of the entire Persian army was not at once dropped on the failure of the loan negotiations, but was constantly pressed all through the spring.

2. In March M. Naus approached Sir A. Hardinge with a proposal that His Majesty's Government should advance a sum of 200,000*l.* Russia, his Excellency said, was willing to advance 400,000*l.*, but on such stringent political conditions that the Persian Government were unable to accept her offer.

3. In April the Persian Government proposed to raise 150,000*l.* from the Imperial Bank of Persia by agreeing to redeem the annual royalty of 4,000*l.* payable in virtue of the bank's concession. The bank dallied with the proposal for some time, but finally informed the Persian Government that they were warned by their legal adviser that, by the terms of their charter, they were not legally entitled to make further advances to the Persian Government.



4. In the beginning of May His Majesty's Government agreed to advance a sum up to 200,000*l.* on the security of the southern customs, on condition that the eventual control of the Karun irrigation scheme should be in the hands of Great Britain. The offer on presentation was reduced to 100,000*l.*, but the Grand Vizier objected to the condition, and the Shah's departure for Europe early in May rendered the local negotiation of any loan with political conditions impossible. In these circumstances Sir A. Hardinge suggested that it would be politic for the Imperial Bank of Persia to stretch a point and furnish a sum in consideration of the redemption of their royalties (see above, No. 3), but this scheme again fell through.

5. In the beginning of June the Russian Government advanced a sum of 100,000*l.* without political conditions, but in consideration of a verbal assurance of the settlement of all outstanding Russian questions. A notable point about this loan, which, as far as can be ascertained, was the only one that the Persian Government succeeded in raising in 1905, is the fact that the Russian Minister, in announcing it to the Regent, laid special stress on its being a personal concession to his Highness to facilitate the task of the Regency in the Shah's absence. It was, in fact, an earnest of future favours to the Heir Apparent.

6. In July, as a result of further overtures, His Majesty's Government consented to advance a sum of 150,000*l.* The condition attached to the proposals of May (control of the Karun irrigation) was withdrawn, and in its stead it was stipulated that—

(1.) The Persian Government should officially recognize the interpretation placed by His Majesty's Government on the phrase: "The customs of Fars and the Persian Gulf";

(2.) That all railway construction in South Persia, including Seistan, be carried out, in so far as foreign assistance is required, under the auspices of His Majesty's Government.

Negotiations for a loan on these terms also fell through, the Persian Government not being satisfied with the amount offered.

7. In December the Grand Vizier again made an urgent appeal to His Majesty's Government for a loan of 800,000*l.*, urging that the Russian Government were prepared to advance a much larger sum on severe political conditions, which Persia was not disposed to accept. His Majesty's Government refused to entertain the proposal.

#### IV.—TELEGRAPHS.

- (A.) Russians and the Meshed-Seistan Line.
- (B.) Proposed Extension of Central Persian Line.
- (C.) Nasratabad Extension.

##### (A.) *Russians and the Meshed-Seistan Line.*

All through the year the Russians have been making determined and ceaseless efforts to acquire entire control of the Meshed Seistan telegraph line, with a view to strengthening their political and strategical position by holding in their own hands the entire system of telegraphic communication along the frontier.

The Persians at first made a show of resistance, and refused to admit to the Persian offices the thirteen signallers whom the Russians posted at various points along the line; but on the eve of the Shah's departure for Europe in the beginning of May, His Majesty, partly under financial pressure and partly in the hope of securing, on his impending visit to the Russian Court, a showy reception commensurate with his intense vanity, agreed to give the Russian signallers "provisional" access to the Persian offices.

A similar right was at once claimed for British signallers, and was theoretically admitted by the Persian Government. Men were sent from India to be posted at Turbat and Birjand. The Persians have announced their intention of refusing to admit these men, on the ground that negotiations are now in progress for the withdrawal of the Russians, but a compromise is now under consideration by which the British signallers on the line will be officially recognized, and His Majesty's Government will permit the Mollah, who was banished from Urmi to Tabreez as a result of the representations

of His Majesty's Representative (see under "Attacks on Foreigners—Urmi Murders") to return to his native city. (Effect has now been given to the suggested compromise, February 1906.)

The exact status and powers of the Russians on the line are somewhat difficult to ascertain; but, besides the Russian signallers, who receive their orders and pay from Tiflis, and have nothing to do with the Persian Government, there are two Russian inspectors and six mechanics, who are believed to receive their pay, half from the Russian and half from the Persian Government, though the latter deny their share in this transaction. These inspectors control the Persian "gholams" along the line, and are in charge of supervision and repairs. A sum of money sent for the repair of the line from Kain to Seistan has been traced to the Russian Consulate-General at Meshed, and the Indian Government have suggested that we must insist upon having a share in the work, preferably on the lines of a section being intrusted to each of the rival Powers for repair.

In addition to the constant pressure put upon the Central Government at Tehran to complete the cession of the control of the line to Russia, M. Somow, the Councillor of the Russian Legation, on the occasion of his visit to Meshed in the summer (see under "Disturbances—Meshed Riots") was instructed to do everything in his power to effect this object, and the Russian Consular officers at Meshed and Seistan have been working indefatigably with the same end in view.

##### (B.) *Proposed Extension of Central Persian Line.*

It was proposed in the early part of the year that the Persian Government should be asked to sanction the extension of the Central Persian line, under the administration of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, by a wire from Karachi to Panjgur, by way of Kuhak and Mirjawar, but the moment was not considered favourable for asking such a concession, and the matter was allowed to drop, as far as the passage of the line through Persian territory was concerned.

##### (C.) *Nasratabad Extension.*

The extension from Nasratabad to Kuh-i-Malik Siah is strongly pressed for by the Government of India, and the Persian Government have been urged over and over again to concede it. Our demands are based on the obvious utility of the line itself, and on the plea that we are entitled to this concession as a set-off to the permission accorded to the Russians to build a line from Kuchan to Bajgiran. The Persians have so far declined to entertain the idea, but negotiations still continue.

*Henjam-Bunder Abbas Extension.*—Dealt with under the heading of "Agreements."

#### V.—ATTACKS ON FOREIGNERS.

- (A.) Urmi Murders.
- (B.) Attack on Captain Gough.
- (C.) The Douglas-Lorimer Outrage.
- (D.) Attack on Mr. Consul Grahame's Escort at Mehrabad.

##### (A.) *Urmi Murders.*

At the end of 1904 the United States' Government came to the following agreement with the Persian Government with regard to the murder by Kurds of an American missionary named Labaree:—

1. An indemnity of 5,000*l.*, to be paid at once.
2. The perpetual imprisonment of Seyid Ghaffar, the chief criminal.
3. The remaining accomplices to be brought to justice by the 9th March, 1906.
4. No fresh tax to be levied from the Christian population of Urmi for the indemnity.

Failing the fulfilment of any of these conditions, the indemnity to be raised to 8,500*l.*, the sum demanded in the first instance.

The indemnity of 5,000*l.* was paid, and Seyid Ghaffar, the chief criminal, is now in prison in Tehran.

British demands in connection with the Urmi question were complied with, in so far that the Urmi Mollah, Mirza Hussein Agha, the chief adviser and instigator of the Kurds, was removed from Urmi to Tabreez (although it was stipulated that he should proceed to Tehran or Meshed) and the Governor of Urmi dismissed.

During the whole of the year the British and American Legations have kept up a constant struggle with the Persian Government to try to induce them to carry out the remaining terms of their Agreement with the United States' Government, and to restore order in the Urmi district, where the lives of the missionaries are in constant danger, and the Christian population is in a perpetual state of terror.

In the early part of the year the Persians sent a special Commissioner to investigate the case against the Kurds, but he never got further than Tabreez, and the only progress made was that certain of the Kurds accused of complicity in the Labaree murder were brought to Tehran.

In the summer His Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez proposed that, if the Persian Government could not be induced to send an expedition against the Kurds and thoroughly pacify the country, it might be as well for the missionaries to endeavour to come to an amicable agreement with the Kurds, who should be required to give hostages to the Persian Government for their future good behaviour. This suggestion was vetoed by the American Government, who insisted on the fulfilment of the terms of their Agreement.

In October the Persian Government were at length induced to appoint a special Commissioner, and Mirza Bagher Khan set out for Urmi with the accused Kurds who had been brought to Tehran, while Mr. Wratislaw, His Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez, was appointed to look after British and American interests. The inquiry was to include the attack on Captain Gough (see below) as well as the Labaree murder.

Mr. Wratislaw strongly insisted on the necessity of the accused Kurds being treated as prisoners until the inquiry was concluded, and the American Minister was induced to demand from the Persian Government that this should be done; but, in spite of their assurances, the Persian Commissioner let the accused men travel in perfect freedom, with the inevitable result that they quietly left him on the road between Tabreez and Urmi, and returned in triumph to their own villages.

Since then no progress whatever has been made with the inquiry. There has been much parleying between the Kurds and the emissaries of the Valiahd, and threats of severe measures, but absolutely nothing has been done.

The whole case has afforded an excellent example of Persian obstructive methods combined with Russian intrigue. The Russians, partly to discredit the British in Azerbaijan (whom, rather than the Americans, whose interests they were upholding, they recognized from the first as being identified in the Persian mind with the case), and partly to curry favour with the Valiahd, intrigued constantly and unscrupulously in favour of the Kurds. In the early part of the year, when their efforts to prevent the expulsion of the Urmi Mollah had proved unsuccessful, they even went so far as to publish a false official communiqué to the effect that the American and Persian Governments had expressed to the Russian Government their gratitude for assistance rendered in the settling of the Urmi incident.

The Valiahd on his side has been lavish in promises, and has made a great show of endeavouring to bring the offenders to justice, while secretly assuring them of his protection; and the Persian Government have obstructed and prevaricated and brought forward every excuse, from the state of the weather to a pathetic plea that the accused Kurds had been long away from home, and had been allowed their freedom in order to visit their families, and would doubtless soon come in to be tried.

These tactics have at length worn out the patience of the American Minister, who has suggested that Mr. Wratislaw's continued presence at Urmi can serve no further useful purpose, and has referred the whole question to his Government.

Closely bound up with this case is the long struggle with the Persian Government over the Majid-es-Sultaneh.

This official was the only Persian who gave any real assistance to the British and American authorities in their attempt to settle the Urmi business. He consequently earned the bitter enmity of the Valiahd, who insulted and struck him, and attempted to extort a large sum of money from him. For fear of worse things happening to him he sought refuge in His Majesty's Consulate-General at Tabreez, and a long struggle began with the Persian Government to induce them to permit him to go abroad. This was at length successful, and in January 1906 the Majid-es-Sultaneh left Tabreez for Tiflis.

### (B.) *Attack on Captain Gough.*

Captain Gough, while on special service at Urmi in connection with the murders of missionaries, was attacked by a body of Kurds in the end of 1904. He was not hit, but about twenty shots were fired at him.

The attack was to form the subject of inquiry at Urmi at the same time as the Labaree murder, but, as explained above, the inquiry has so far led to nothing. No satisfaction of any kind has been given by the Persian Government, who, in a note to Mr. Grant Duff of the 7th January, 1906, state that the fault was Captain Gough's own, in that he galloped towards the Kurds, which he ought not to have done. This somewhat naive justification for a murderous attack professes to be based on a letter from Captain Gough to Mr. Wratislaw, which has, in some unknown manner, fallen into the hands of the Persian Foreign Office. The letter, of which the Persian Government did not scruple to send a copy to the Legation, does not even convey the idea that Captain Gough did gallop towards the Kurds. It merely says that when the shots came raining round him he put his horse at a gallop.

### (C.) *The Douglas-Lorimer Outrage.*

This case also dates from 1904, and in this, too, the Persian Government have so far given no satisfaction.

It will be remembered that Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas, Military Attaché to His Majesty's Legation in Tehran, and Mr. Lorimer, at that time British Vice-Consul at Ahwaz, while travelling on the public service in South-West Persia, were set upon by their Lur guides, robbed of everything they possessed, and seriously wounded.

In January 1905, besides compensation for the actual losses incurred and the punishment of the offending tribe, His Majesty's Government demanded of the Persian Government an indemnity for each officer of 500*l.*, to be paid in five yearly instalments of 100*l.*, the first due on the 1st April, 1905.

The Persian Government replied by denying all responsibility for the attack, on the plea that the officers had been warned by the local officials of the dangerous condition of the country in which the outrage occurred. Sir A. Hardinge pointed out to them in reply that the local officials were not held responsible, but the Central Government, who, for the last four or five years had been constantly and strongly urged to take steps for the pacification of the district (in connection with Messrs. Lynch's Arabistan Road Concession), and had taken absolutely no measures to effect this object.

With regard to the punishment of the guilty tribe, some pretence of action was made by the Persian authorities, but, as is usual in this country, the promised expedition was so hindered by intrigues and counter-intrigues, that nothing ever came of it.

The Firman Firma, Governor-General of Luristan and Kermanshah, was intrusted with the expedition, but as he is an enemy of the Grand Vizier, was hampered in every possible way. His request for additional troops was refused, and a large body of those which he might have utilized was drafted off on another expedition.

The Firman Firma procrastinated in the usual Persian way, first on the plea of scarcity of provisions, alleging that he must wait until the crops were reaped, and then on the ground that the autumn migration of the tribes would afford a better opportunity for punitive measures.

In July he succeeded in capturing twelve Lurs, presumably by treachery, and forwarded a photograph of his prisoners to His Majesty's Legation. In this photograph Colonel Douglas and Mr. Lorimer were only able to identify one man with certainty as having been among their assailants.

Since then no further steps have been taken, and the Persian Government have once again written to His Majesty's Legation refusing to pay an indemnity, and repudiating all responsibility for the outrage.

### (D.) *Attack on Mr. Consul Grahame's Escort at Mehrabad.*

In the end of March the escort of Mr. Grahame, His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz, while travelling with members of the Indian Commercial Mission, was

attacked at Mehrabad, near the meeting place of the Governorships of Ispahan, Yezd, and Fars, and an Indian sowar was severely wounded.

Compensation was demanded from the local authorities for this attack, and they handed over a sum of 300 tomans (50*l.*) The sowar was indemnified, but the sum paid by the Persian authorities did not suffice to cover the medical and other expenses resulting from the incident, which have had to be defrayed by His Majesty's Government.

#### VI.—DISTURBANCES IN PERSIA IN 1905.

- (A.) Meshed Riots.
- (B.) Unrest at Tabreez.
- (C.) Kerman Religious Troubles.
- (D.) Yezd Anti-Christian Movement.
- (E.) Tehran Disturbances.
- (F.) Fars Disturbances.

Disturbances of a serious character have taken place during the past year in towns in almost every part of Persia.

##### (A.) Meshed Riots.

In the month of Moharrem (March 1905) a serious disturbance occurred at Meshed, resulting in great destruction of property, chiefly belonging to Russian subjects.

The riot ostensibly started with trouble about a Mahomedan woman and a Russian Armenian, but it is rumoured that it was really engineered by the Governor-General himself with the object of being continued in office. The chief importance of the affair was that a large force of Russian troops was detailed for Meshed, and 300 infantry and Cossacks actually started for Askhabad, but were recalled.

The Russian claims arising out of these riots have caused much trouble, and led to the exchange of acrimonious correspondence between the Russian Legation and the Persian Government. The Persians refused to grant any compensation unless their subjects were indemnified for the losses suffered in the Baku troubles. M. de Somow, Councillor of the Russian Legation (now Russian Chargé d'Affaires, January 1906), travelled to Meshed to enforce these claims, but returned to Tehran without effecting anything.

In September, owing chiefly to the troubles in the Caucasus, there appeared to be danger of a serious anti-Armenian outbreak in Meshed, but matters quieted down, and there has, so far, been no recurrence.

##### (B.) Unrest at Tabreez.

Although there has so far been no actual outbreak at Tabreez, the arrival of Moslem refugees from the Caucasus with tales of the murders of their co-religionists by Armenians has created a very dangerous situation and caused much anxiety. In summer, and again in autumn, serious trouble was feared, and at the close of the year the British Acting Consul-General reported that there was no improvement in the situation.

##### (C.) Kerman Religious Troubles.

In the summer there were serious religious troubles at Kerman between the sects of the Sheikhis and Balisaris. The Zafir-es-Sultaneh, the Governor, showed sufficient firmness to cause a Mollah who had incited a riot to be beaten. The Central Government, though it approved his action at the time, was afterwards weak enough to cede to popular clamour and recall him to Tehran.

##### (D.) Yezd Anti-Christian Movement.

In the month of Ramazan the local Mollahs, on the pretext of the expulsion of a boy from the Church Missionary Schools, attempted to start an anti-Christian agitation. Violent language was used and considerable alarm created, but the matter passed off quietly.

##### (E.) Tehran Disturbances.

The agitation against the Belgian Customs Administration has been reported under the heading "Customs," but a movement of a much more wide-spread character has since occurred.

In December the Ala-ed-Dowleh, lately appointed Governor of Tehran, attempted to dictate to the merchants in the bazaar the maximum price which they might put on sugar, an article which has largely risen in value, owing to the shutting down of the Russian sugar refineries. On the merchants resisting his order, he caused some of them to be severely beaten, including an aged Seyid. It is said that, on this latter protesting against such an indignity being inflicted on a descendant of the Prophet, the Governor ordered him to be taken out and given some more strokes, pointing out that sons of the Prophet should know better than to defy his authority, and that his fault was the greater.

A riot was at once raised in the bazaar, the leading Mujteheds took the matter up, and the popular discontent quickly spread from the Ala-ed-Dowleh until it found expression against the Grand Vizier, and even against the Shah himself. The Mujteheds, though left in the lurch at the last moment by the Imam Jume'h, betook themselves in a body to the great shrine of Shah Abdul Azim, about 6 miles outside the city, placarded the bazaars with revolutionary notices, formulated a petition stating their grievances, and refused to return to Tehran until their demands were granted. The Shah sent frequent emissaries to try to induce them to come in, but they held out for four weeks, and only returned when the following points were conceded to them:—

1. Some form of Constitutional Government: its precise form to be discussed hereafter.
2. Certain changes in the Administration of the Customs Service. This point is also reserved for future discussion.
3. The abolition of the percentage levied on official salaries.
4. The restitution of the recently confiscated endowment of a "Madrassah."

It is said that while the Mujteheds were at Shah Abdul Azim almost all the highest officials of the Government, with the exception of the Kajar family and the immediate *entourage* of the Shah, were intriguing with them against the Grand Vizier.

The Shah, besides granting the demands of the Mujteheds, sent his State carriages to bring in the leaders, and provided public vehicles and special trains to bring in their followers.

The agitation cannot by any means be considered as closed by the Shah's compliance with the Mollahs' demands, for the fulfilment of which no steps have of course been taken, and further disturbances are prophesied for the month of Moharrem. Meanwhile the Mujteheds are delighted with their technical victory, and vow vengeance against the Imam Jume'h, who deserted their cause.

It is curious to note that the demands of the Mujteheds were evidently inspired by recent events in Russia: the demand for Constitutional Government, indeed, seems almost suicidal on the part of a privileged class like the Persian Mollahs, and was probably promulgated in a purely imitative spirit, without any perception of the consequences which would result to themselves if it were granted.

Another striking feature, both of this agitation and of the earlier one against M. Naus, is that on both these occasions an appeal was made to the Turkish Ambassador as the Representative of the Khalif, and therefore the proper mouthpiece for the grievances of the Faithful.



(F.) *Fars Disturbances.*

From the month of June onwards the Province of Fars has been in a state of ferment.

The trouble is due to the misgovernment, cruelty, and tyranny of the Shoa-es-Sultaneh, one of the Shah's sons, and his Vazir, the Sardar-i-Akram.

Disturbances first broke out at Shiraz in June in the shape of an anti-Jewish movement. Abul Kassim, a British Indian subject, was implicated in the early troubles, and was removed from Shiraz by Sir A. Hardinge at the request of the Prince Governor. In August, a French Jew, named Agha Khan, took "bast" at His Majesty's Consulate. His nationality was disputed by the Persian Government, and the question led to some acrimonious correspondence between the French Legation and the Persian Foreign Office, and to joint action on the part of the French and British Legations.

In October the Shoa-es-Sultaneh left for Europe, and in November the anti-Jewish disturbances broke out with renewed violence, gradually losing their anti-Semitic character and becoming, first, a demonstration against the Sardar-i-Akram, who had been left as Deputy-Governor, and lastly an undisguised agitation against the return of the Prince Governor himself.

While the movement was still of an anti-Jewish character the position of Jews in Shiraz became so critical, and a general massacre seemed so imminent, that His Majesty's Consul, after the murder of a Jewish woman in broad daylight, advised the leader of the Jews in Shiraz—one Veneziani, of Italian nationality—to gather the Jewish women and children into his house. He then put a guard of Indian sowars from his escort over the house. This action, which was duly reported to and approved by His Majesty's Government, formed the subject of a formal complaint on the part of the Persian Government, who alleged that Indian troops had been posted in the Jewish quarter, an absolutely unfounded accusation, as Veneziani's house, where the refugees were collected, does not stand in the Jewish quarter at all.

By December the movement had entirely lost its anti-Semitic character, and was openly directed against the Prince Governor, the Jewish Rabbis being even sounded as to whether they would participate in it.

All trade and business was at a standstill, malecontents were flocking in from the country round, there were serious disturbances at Kazerun and elsewhere in the province, and the people of Shiraz kept sending telegraphic messages to the Heads of Missions in Tehran, setting forth their grievances, and begging for the intervention of the foreign Representatives for the dismissal of the Prince Governor. Similar messages were sent to the Grand Vizier.

Mr. Grant Duff had long before warned the Persian Government of the folly and danger of insisting upon the retention of the Shoa-es-Sultaneh as Governor-General of Fars, had remonstrated against the anarchy prevailing in the province, and had represented the losses suffered by British trade owing to the insecurity of the roads and the general lawlessness of the district. But his warnings had been systematically disregarded, and when the crash came, and the fact could no longer be hidden that the agitation was a serious protest against the misgovernment of the province, the Persian Government showed their resentment of these timely warnings by complaining to His Majesty's Government of Mr. Grant Duff's attitude.

Matters, however, had gone too far for the movement to be altogether overlooked, and at the close of the year the Persian Government sent a special High Commissioner, the Vazir-i-Makhsus, to inquire into the state of affairs.

The Shoa-es-Sultaneh is the favourite son of the Shah, and is backed by the most powerful clique at Court, so that there is still some fear that an attempt may be made to reinstate him later on. But the Mollahs of Shiraz have threatened that if he comes back they will leave the city in a body; and the Fars tribesmen have declared their intention of resisting his return to their last cartridge.

## VII.—CONCESSIONS.

- (A.) Motor-cars.
- (B.) Karun Irrigation Scheme.
- (C.) D'Arcy Oil Syndicate.
- (D.) Tehran Water Supply.
- (E.) Sponge Exploration Syndicate.
- (F.) Railway Schemes.

(A.) *Motor-car Concessions.*

Concessions for introducing motor-cars for goods traffic in different parts of Persia have formed the subject of considerable correspondence during the past year, although, so far, little has been done to carry into effect the various schemes proposed.

In 1904 the Sani-ed-Dowleh, a Persian magnate, obtained from the Shah a monopoly for running motor-cars throughout Persia, but his right to exercise any monopoly on the roads constructed and worked by Russian Companies was contested by the Russian Finance Ministry on the ground that his concession could not cancel rights previously conceded to them. The Sani-ed-Dowleh appears to have acquiesced in this view, and, as was reported by Sir Arthur Hardinge in his despatch No. 141 of the 24th June, 1905, the Russians expressed their intention of organizing a service on the roads held by them. Two heavy motor lorries appear to have been imported, and these have been in use of the section of the road between Kazvin and Tehran during the latter part of the year. The weight carried was said to be about 4 tons of goods, in addition to twelve passengers on the top of the load. They do not travel at night, and take something over twenty-four hours to cover the 90 miles of road. It was reported that other cars which had been ordered were expected to arrive in Persia in time to inaugurate a regular service along the whole line from Resht to Tehran on the 1st January of this year, but owing, it is said, to recent events in Russia, they have not yet come. If successful, the service will doubtless be extended to the road from Kazvin to Hamadan, as soon as that track is metalled and fit to take regular traffic. None of the other roads worked by Russian Companies are as yet sufficiently far advanced to be able to take heavy motor traffic.

In August, the Sani-ed-Dowleh informed Sir Arthur Hardinge that he had already purchased six motors, and that he intended to commence by running them from Tehran to Kazvin and Tehran to Kum, his idea being later to inaugurate a service on the roads to Kermanshah and Meshed. He was at that time trying to raise money from either the English or Russian Bank, and, failing to come to terms with the former, it seems probable that some arrangement was made with M. Grube, as on the 18th November Mr. Grant Duff was informed by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh that a Company consisting of nine Persians and one foreigner, with a capital of about 45,000*l.*, was to be formed to run Renard motor-trains on the Tehran-Meshed and Tehran-Kum-Kermanshah roads. When asked who the foreigner was, the Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that he had not yet been nominated, but it is suspected that he is the Russian Financial Agent.

Various proposals have been made by His Majesty's Minister here and by the Government of India with a view to counteracting the loss to British trade which must ensue from the establishment of a regular motor service on the Russian roads. The Persian Transport Company can, under the terms of its Concession, claim rights similar to those exercised by the Russian Company on their roads, and Sir Arthur Hardinge suggested that an arrangement might be come to with the Sani-ed-Dowleh by which, in return for our assistance to him in obtaining a loan from the Imperial Bank, he should give to an English Company running powers from Ispahan and southwards to Shiraz, and eventually to the Persian Gulf. The Government of India would prefer a Concession for a road from Bandar Abbas via Rigan to Bam, which might in time be joined to Kashan via Kerman and Yazd. Other suggestions have also been made, but as yet no definite steps have been taken in the matter.



(B.) *The Karun Irrigation Scheme.*

In connection with this scheme Major Morton, R.E., an expert in irrigation, accompanied by two native surveyors, was sent from India in January 1905 to examine and report upon the scheme put forward by the Dutch engineer, Herr von Roggen. The object of his mission was kept secret from the local authorities, but Herr von Roggen was instructed by the Grand Vizier to discuss the proposals fully and confidentially with him. After a careful survey, Major Morton in July submitted his Report. His estimate of the cost of carrying out the scheme as proposed by the Dutch engineer amounts to 2,246,000*l.*, with an annual charge of 10,000*l.* for the upkeep of the works, while he calculates that the net revenue would amount to only about 35,000*l.* per annum, or about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the capital expenditure. He gives his opinion that "there is not in any conceivable circumstances the remotest possibility of Herr von Roggen's scheme paying," and "that, if it did pay, it is to be wholly condemned for various reasons."

In view of this Report, the question of making a loan to the Persian Government to enable them to carry out the scheme has been dropped.

(C.) *The D'Arcy Oil Syndicate.*

The borings made by the Syndicate near Kasr-i-Shirin on the Turkish frontier were closed down early last year, and little work has since been done. Mr. Preece, His Majesty's Consul-General at Ispahan, while on leave in England, was asked to make an arrangement with the Bakhtiari by which the latter should open up their country to the exploring parties of the Syndicate. Accordingly, on his return to Persia in October, he entered into negotiations with the tribe, and after some trouble, caused by internal dissensions among the Chiefs, an Agreement was concluded and signed by them. By the terms of this the Syndicate are permitted to make borings and explorations for oil in the country owned by the Bakhtiari, and to erect the necessary buildings; and the latter agreed to protect the works and working parties, and to guard such roads as it might be necessary to construct, in return for an annual payment of 2,000*l.*, the Chiefs accepting responsibility for robbery or for loss or damage to the works and buildings of the Syndicate. It is further stipulated that should oil be found in sufficient quantities, and a pipe line be laid, the Syndicate will pay a further sum of 1,000*l.* per annum for the safeguarding of the pipe line; and that, in the event of one or more Companies being formed to work the oil, the Chiefs shall receive 3 per cent. of all the ordinary shares issued. This Agreement is to be in force for five years provided the Company are working during that time; and should oil be found in sufficient quantities, and the Company proceed to refine oil and trade in it, the terms will be binding so long as the Concession continues in force.

In accordance with these terms, a Mr. Bertie and two assistants, with a quantity of plant, arrived at Ahwaz in December, and commenced work on a road which would enable the machinery to be conveyed to the oil-fields; but the Persian Government has refused to recognize the Agreement made with the Chiefs, and, owing to dissensions among the latter, difficulties have already arisen on the subject of the guards.

(D.) *Tehran Water Supply.*

An English Company, known as the Standard Trust (Limited), has for some years been trying to obtain from the Persian Government a Concession for supplying the town of Tehran with water, but so far without success. Last year negotiations were reopened, and during the Shah's visit to Europe the Prime Minister was approached privately on the matter through the Motashim-es-Sultaneh, and is said to have made a verbal promise, which he has since denied, that the Concession would be granted. Mr. Grant Duff has been instructed to use his good offices to assist in obtaining the Concession should he be asked to do so, but no action has been taken pending the receipt from the London office of the Company of full particulars of the terms they would be willing to accept.

(E.) *The Sponge Exploration Syndicate.*

On the 9th August, 1905, a Concession was signed at Vichy giving to the Sponge Exploration Syndicate (Limited), of London, the exclusive right of fishing for and exploiting sponges in the waters of the Persian Gulf belonging to Persia. The Syndicate, which is believed to be composed of Greeks, agree to pay His Majesty the Shah a sum of 1,500*l.* when the Concession is granted, and a royalty of 50 fr. on every 100 kilog. of sponges exported abroad or brought into Persia for sale. The Concession, which is for fifty years, includes the right to erect the necessary buildings, &c., for carrying on their operations, and to import material free of customs duty.

The limits are defined as from Fao to Gwettar, embracing the whole of the southern coast of Persia and all the islands belonging to this kingdom. The Persian Government reserve the right to revoke the Concession should the Syndicate stop work for a continuous period of eighteen months after the 1st May, 1906.

(F.) *Railway Concessions.*

In July last year it was reported that a group of German and American capitalists was endeavouring to secure a Concession for a railway from either Bushire or Mohammerah to Meshed and the Transcasian frontier, passing via Tehran, and with a branch to Khanikin. They intended to offer a very large sum to the Shah, and sounded M. Naus as to his willingness to act as their intermediary, offering him shares in the enterprise as a reward for his services. The proposal was declined by M. Naus on the ground that his official position precluded him from assuming such a task, and he warned them that an understanding with the British and Russian Governments was an essential preliminary to the success of their scheme.

A rumour has been current in Meshed that the Russians were trying to obtain a Concession for a railway thence to Tehran.

In this connection it may be noted that early in the year Sir Arthur Hardinge addressed a note to the Minister for Foreign Affairs respecting the terms on which the Railway Agreement with Russia had been renewed in 1899. In a subsequent conversation with His Majesty's Minister, the Mushir-ed-Dowleh said that he believed the Agreement had been ultimately renewed for five and not, as was sometimes alleged, for ten years, but that there had been no formal Convention, or even exchange of notes, the Shah having merely minuted a note or Memorandum which was now in the possession of the Russian Government. His Excellency added that the Persian Government could not verify the fact as to the term of years without referring to the Russian Legation, and that they thought it undesirable by doing this to draw Russian attention to the question.

There have been no fresh developments regarding other Concessions, a list of which was given in the summary for last year.

## VIII.—ROADS.

*Roads in which Great Britain is interested.*

- (A.) The Bakhtiari Road.
- (B.) The Persian Transport Company's Concession.

*Russian Road Concessions.*

- (A.) Resht-Tehran Road.
- (B.) Resht-Kazian Road.
- (C.) Kazvin-Hamadan Road.
- (D.) Julfa-Tabreez Road.
- (E.) Meshed-Askhabad Road.

*Roads in which Great Britain is interested.*

(A.) *The Bakhtiari Road.*

Mr. Preece, His Majesty's Consul-General at Ispahan, visited the Bakhtiari Chiefs in the autumn of last year and discussed with them the question of the upkeep of the road, regarding which no agreement with Messrs. Lynch Brothers has yet been come to. It will be remembered that in 1904 the Bakhtiaris agreed to give the sum of 30,000 krans down to put the track in order, and to pay 10,000 krans annually for repairs, these sums being sufficient, in Mr. Preece's opinion, for the purpose. Messrs. Lynch, however, objected to the arrangement, on the ground that the amounts allotted were insufficient, and the Chiefs have since withdrawn their offer, saying that they would prefer to keep the road in repair themselves. A sum of 19,431 krans is also claimed by Messrs. Lynch for upkeep of the two bridges for 1903 and 1904, but these charges appeared to Mr. Preece so excessive that he did not even show them to the Chiefs. Meanwhile the track, though everywhere passable for mules, is reported to be badly in need of repairs in several places, and more caravanserais are also required. The principal Bakhtiari Chiefs are now in Tehran, and it is hoped that a compromise may be arrived at before they leave.

(B.) *The Persian Transport Company's Concession.*

The work done by the Persian Transport Company during the past year has been chiefly on the Kum-Sultanabad section of the roads included in the Concession. A large number of culverts have been rebuilt, and new ones made; some bad gradients have been eased, and the surface has been repaired and the track generally improved. Extensive surface repairs were also carried out on the Tehran-Kum road, and the bridge over the Rudkhaneh-i-Shur has been overhauled and put into proper repair. No work has yet been done on the Kum-Ispahan section of the road, and the disturbed condition of Luristan has precluded any action with regard to the extension from Sultanabad southwards.

*Russian Road Concessions.*

(A.) *The Resht-Kazvin-Tehran Road.*

This road has on the whole been kept in good repair during the year, though the traffic was interrupted at times by heavy snows in the winter, and by falls of rock in the more hilly parts during the spring. The section of the road from Resht to Piri Bazar was in very bad condition during the early part of the year, but was repaired to some extent, and by the autumn was in fairly good order. Probably the Company are unwilling to spend much money on this section, as they will naturally wish to divert the traffic as far as possible to the Resht-Kazian road as soon as it is ready.

(B.) *The Resht-Kazian Road.*

In May last it was stated that the work on this road had been expedited in order that it might be made use of by His Majesty the Shah on his way to Europe, and that it was then fit for vehicular traffic. Mr. Messervy, His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Resht, has, however, travelled over it quite recently, and reports that, though fairly good for a short distance out of Resht, it becomes very heavy and extremely difficult for wheeled traffic as Kazian is approached. The bridges, of which there are four, are not yet completed, and the road is used only for local traffic. A light Décauville or trolley line of 24 or 30 inches gauge has been laid for some distance from the Kazian end, and is used for the transport of material.

When the Shah passed through Enzelli, he was, it is said, much annoyed at the number of houses which the Russians are building at Kazian for the engineers and other employes on the harbour docks, but very slow progress has been made on these works during the year, and the little done has been damaged by storms during the winter, and work has for some time been at a standstill.

(C.) *The Kazvin-Hamadan Road.*

Work on this road was proceeded with during the year, and by the beginning of December the whole of the roadway was finished and all bridges and culverts were built, with the exception of the bridge near Rezan, which was nearly completed, and the large bridge over the Kara Su River at Ab-i-garm. This latter had twice been carried away by sudden floods, and, the workmen having deserted, *en masse* after the foundations of a new bridge were laid at the end of November, it will probably not be ready before the spring of the current year. Metal has been laid and rolled for about 30 miles at the Kazvin end and 8 miles out from Hamadan, and all post-houses are built, but not yet furnished. At present the road is very little used, and it will be at least a year before the metalling is completed and the road ready to take heavy traffic.

(D.) *The Julfa-Tabreez Road.*

On the 21st August His Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez reported that work on this road had come to a standstill owing to quarrels between the Russian officials employed on it. A portion of the new roadway had been washed away near the Julfa end, and the net result was that the journey from Tabreez to Julfa was more difficult than before, the old track being obstructed and the new road practically useless. Work was apparently resumed later, as it was reported in December that the Russian employes on the road had gone on strike owing to a disagreement with the authorities about their pay. On the whole, little progress has been made during the year.

(E.) *The Meshed-Ashkhabad Road.*

During the last few months rumours have been current in Meshed that the portion of this road which is in Persian territory had been sold by the concessionnaire to the Russian Bank. Mr. Grant Duff addressed the Prime Minister officially on the subject, and was informed in reply that there is no foundation for the report, and that the concessionnaire has not the right to transfer the road. It is, however, at least certain that repairs to the track are to be undertaken shortly, and that a Russian and a Persian engineer, accompanied by a representative of the Customs, left Meshed some months ago in order to make an estimate of the cost of the work.

IX.—MISCELLANEOUS.

- (A.) Protection of Koweitis.
- (B.) Perso-Turkish Frontier Dispute.
- (C.) Arms for Meshed.
- (D.) Embargoes.
- (E.) Bakhtiaris.

(A.) *Protection of Koweitis*

The protection of Koweitis in Persia by British Consular officers still continues to be made a grievance by the Turkish Government, and the Turkish Ambassador has formally protested against the protection extended to them by His Majesty's Resident in the Persian Gulf.

Sir A. Hardinge was accordingly instructed to endeavour to obtain for Koweitis in Persia the same privileges as for Afghans—namely, "that the friendly recommendations and wishes of the British Government on their behalf should be accepted."

The question still remains unsettled.

(B.) *Perso-Turkish Frontier Dispute.*

In October the Persian Government made representations, both to His Majesty's Legation in Tehran and to the Foreign Office in London, to the effect that Turkish troops had occupied Lahijan and Vazneh, places which they claimed to be on Persian territory. Both Russia and Great Britain are appealed to as Arbitrators in the frontier delimitation of 1865.

The Turks appointed a Commission and expressed their willingness to meet Persian Representatives on the spot, and endeavour to come to an agreement with regard to the frontier, but the Persian Government, though strongly advised to accept this arrangement, refused to proceed in the matter until the Turkish troops should be removed from the territory in dispute. The Sultan refused to remove his troops. Negotiations are still continuing.

(C.) *Arms for Meshed.*

Owing to the disturbed condition of Meshed, and the constant danger of serious trouble spreading from Baku and the Caucasus, His Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed asked in July that 100 rifles might be supplied for the protection of His Majesty's Consulate-General there, and 30 for His Majesty's Consulate in Seistan, together with a reserve of ammunition for each place. Such a request was all the more justified in that the Russian Consulate-General at Meshed was said to be constantly receiving supplies of arms, and a party of Russian Cossacks had a short time before forced the Customs barrier on the Khorassan frontier and forcibly imported a quantity of arms and ammunition.

Permission was asked of the Persian Government to import the weapons, but, as had been anticipated, it was at once refused, first, on the plea that the importation of these rifles would render futile the negotiations which the Persian Government stated were then being carried on for the removal of the arms forcibly imported by the Russians, and afterwards on the ground that such importation would disturb the populace at Meshed, and might lead to trouble.

The question was constantly pressed, but the Persian Government would make no concession, and at last, in January 1906, the Government of India decided to send the arms up to our frontier station at Robat under an escort of troops, whose presence there was thought desirable, owing to the outbreak of plague in Seistan and the likelihood of the Russians attempting to establish a military cordon in that province.

(D.) *Embargoes.*

The imposition of embargoes by local officials for purposes of private gain has long formed a just grievance to foreign merchants, especially on the Karun River. In the early part of 1905, the Governor of Arabistan once more imposed such an embargo on grain from the Karun. After constant representations the Valiahd in the summer so far relaxed as to invite Messrs. Lynch, the principal sufferers, to state the amount of grain which they wished to export, promising to give it free passage. The Persian Government, moreover, were persuaded to declare that in future embargoes would only be imposed after due notice, and that in each case a period of grace would be given.

In pursuance of this assurance, the Persian Government have since announced an embargo on grain from all southern ports, and on lambskins and sheep for the whole of Persia.

(E.) *Bakhtiars.*

(The Bakhtiari road and the Petroleum Agreement, concluded with the Khans by Mr. Preece on behalf of Mr. D'Arcy, are dealt with under "Roads" and "Concessions" respectively.)

The Bakhtiari tribe is reported to be increasing in wealth and civilization, with the unfortunate result that the Khans are becoming involved in the tangle of intrigue

that envelopes the Persian Court. Haji Ali Kuli Khan, who has spent much time in Tehran, and acquired a little of the flimsy veneer that passes for civilization at the Shah's Court, has returned to the Bakhtiari country and entered upon a course of intrigue against his brother Khans. He is believed to be working to usurp the place of the present Ilkhani, and it was even categorically reported at one time that he had succeeded in his object. He is doubtless encouraged by the Persian Government, whose traditional policy is to sow discord among powerful dependents and reap an easy harvest of increased authority for themselves. (Haji Ali Kuli Khan has since succeeded in his object, February 1906.)

The same policy may be seen at work in the long-standing dispute between the Central Government and the Khans as to raids committed by Kuhgelu tribesmen on the Bakhtiari road. These tribesmen are technically under the jurisdiction of the Government of Fars, but pass over into the Bakhtiari country, raid caravans on the Bakhtiari road, and then return to the safe shelter of their homes in Fars. The Bakhtiari are forbidden to follow them, while the Fars authorities disclaim responsibility for robberies committed outside their territory. During 1905, His Majesty's Legation have had to make frequent complaints of robberies of British goods committed by the tribe, and have repeatedly urged upon the Central Government that full powers should be given to the Bakhtiari to follow up the raiders and summarily punish them, but the only effect has been that the Khans have been given complicated and almost unintelligible instructions to the effect that they may follow offenders to their frontier, and must then proceed, in accordance with an elaborate system, to give information as to the identity of the robbers to the Fars authorities. The Bakhtiari, meanwhile, are held pecuniarily responsible for robberies which they are powerless to punish. In this way the Central Government effectually contrive to keep the Bakhtiari at loggerheads with their neighbours.

The Bakhtiari are also unfortunately on bad terms with the Sheikh of Mohammerah. Disputed ownership of a village and mutual complaints that offenders take refuge and find protection and encouragement from the other party have raised ill-feeling between the Khans and the Sheikh. Mr. Preece, on his visit to the Bakhtiari country, was instructed to do his utmost to compose the feud. He spoke seriously to the Khans on the subject, and they promised not to be exacting and to endeavour to come to an agreement on their return to their winter quarters.

## X.—RUMOURS OF 1905.

- (A.) Rumoured Cession of Kishm to Russia.
- (B.) Meshed-Tehran Railway Scheme.
- (C.) Rumoured Sale of Seistan Crown Lands.

(A.) *Kishm.*

A rumour has persistently circulated in the south of Persia to the effect that the Shah, during his visit to Peterhof, ceded, sold, or leased the Island of Kishm to the Russians. It will be remembered the Bunder Abbas-Henjam telegraph extension, built for the Persian Government for the Indo-European Telegraph Department, passes across this island, and that the Persian Government have notified to His Majesty's Legation that they are prepared to pay the cost of the construction of the line and have asked for the account.

*German Railway Scheme.*—(See under "Concessions.")

*Rumoured sale of Meshed-Askhabad road to Russia.*—(See under "Roads.")

(B.) *Meshed-Tehran Railway.*

Rumours have been current to the effect that the Russian Legation has been negotiating with the Persian Government for the early construction of a railway from Tehran to Meshed, and it is stated that engineers have been surveying the road.



(C.) *Sale of Seistan Crown Lands.*

In May a very circumstantial report was received from Meshed to the effect that the Seistan Crown lands, comprising the greater part of the province, had been sold to the Amin-i-Zarb and the Reis-ut-Tujjar, two wealthy Meshed merchants, and that the purchase money had been obtained by them from the Russian Bank.

The Mushir-ed-Dowleh, when asked as to the truth of this report, denied all knowledge of the transaction, and said that it was impossible, as the consent of the Persian Government would have to be obtained in order to make the purchase valid. His Excellency promised to inquire of the Grand Vizier, who by that time had started for Europe with the Shah, but all his telegrams remained unanswered.

It is suspected that the Grand Vizier, acting in the names of the Meshed merchants, tried to get a lien on the Seistan Crown property as security for the loan which he had made to the Shah for the purpose of his European journey. This loan also stood in the names of the merchants, though it was really made by the Grand Vizier himself.

## XI.—RUSSIAN ACTIVITY IN PERSIA IN 1905.

The Russo-Japanese war, and the subsequent troubles in Russia itself, have not led to any relaxation of Russian activity in Persia; on the contrary, the following list of some of the chief instances of Russian activity during 1905 would tend to show that it has increased rather than diminished:—

1. Early in the year Russia demanded the erection of lighthouses on the Persian Gulf, and the placing of buoys in the Gulf ports, offering to survey the coast and undertake the necessary work herself. This was refused by the Shah, who, on the insistence of the Russians, ordered the Persian Customs to carry out the work.
2. Russian Consulates have been established at Lingah and Bunder Abbas.
3. Prince Amatouni, a Russian official of the Ministry of Commerce, has been travelling in the south in the interests of Russian trade.
4. The Russians have been buying up land in the neighbourhood of Meshed and at Enzeli.
5. Interference with the Seistan Frontier Commission, including attempts to stir up local disturbances, misrepresentation of the objects of the Mission in the native press, and a violent attack on Colonel McMahon's Water Award addressed personally to the Valiahd.
6. Interference in the Urmi murder case.
7. Motor-car schemes.
8. The determined attempt to get absolute control of the Meshed-Seistan telegraph line.
9. The attempt, by the exercise of financial pressure, to acquire control of the entire Persian army.
10. The loan of 100,000*l.* advanced to the Valiahd without political conditions as a means of securing the favour of the heir to the throne.
11. Intrigues against the Indian Commercial Mission, and attempts to discredit it by misrepresenting its character to the natives.
12. To these may be added the rumoured intrigues with regard to the Seistan Crown lands, the Meshed-Askhabad road, the Island of Kishm, and the Meshed-Tehran railway scheme, though it should be noted that these are only rumours.

With regard to Russian policy in Persia in the immediate future, it may be well to quote here the following extract from Sir A. Hardinge's despatch No. 126, Confidential, of the 10th June, 1905:—

"M. Vlassoff, my late Russian colleague, who discussed Persian affairs very freely with me, used to say that the advocates of the Russian forward policy in the Middle East placed all their hopes in the advent of a Liberal Government in England, and could continue to play a waiting but steady game till that event, which was certain, sooner or later, to come about; nor was I ever able to convince him that on questions of Imperial, and especially Indian, interests the leaders of both our great parties were now agreed."

## XII.—GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S COMPLAINT AS TO "UNFRIENDLY ACTS" ON THE PART OF THE PERSIAN GOVERNMENT.

In the beginning of 1905 the Government of India enumerated ten grievances against the Persian Government, characterizing them as "unfriendly acts," and asking that steps should be taken to secure satisfaction.

The following were the chief of them:—

1. Urmi murders and attack on Captain Gough.
2. Douglas and Lorimer outrage.
3. Interference with quarantine arrangements in the Persian Gulf.
4. Refusal to reinstate the Hashmet-ul-Mulk in the Governorship of Seistan.
5. Interference with the British postal system in the Persian Gulf.

The remaining five grievances related to various instances of undue activity on the part of the Belgian Customs officials in the Persian Gulf. In some of these satisfaction has since been given, in others a compromise has been arrived at, and in others again the action complained of has tacitly been abandoned, so that it is useless to relate in detail the steps taken with regard to them. But it might be of interest to examine briefly the progress made with the five more important grievances enumerated above:—

1 (a.) *Urmi Murders.*—The Urmi Mollah was removed from Urmi to Tabreez, though it was stipulated and agreed that he should proceed to Tehran or Meshed. A promise was given that house property at Tabreez belonging to Seyid Ghaffer, the chief murderer, now imprisoned in Tehran, would be sold, and the profits devoted to the payment of compensation to the family of the murdered Daniel. Nothing else has been done, and the accomplices in the murders have been allowed to escape, in spite of frequent warnings as to the absolute necessity of keeping them in close custody, while the Commission convened at Urmi to try them has proved a farce.

(b.) *Attack on Captain Gough.*—The Persian Government agreed, under pressure, to include this case among the matters to be examined at Urmi. His Majesty's Consul-General from Tabreez spent four months at that place, but absolutely nothing was done. The Persian Government now maintain that Captain Gough galloped towards his assailants, and that they were therefore justified in attacking him.

2. *Douglas and Lorimer Outrage.*—Persian Government have again denied responsibility, and declined to pay any compensation.

3. *Interference with Quarantine Arrangements in Persian Gulf.*—Questions at issue have been allowed tacitly to drop.

4. *Hashmat-ul-Mulk.*—Persian Government finally offered him the Governorship of Seistan, but he declined to accept it, hoping to secure that of Kain in addition. His Majesty's Government are therefore under no further obligation to him, and as the advantage of affording him further support appears doubtful, the matter has been allowed to drop.

5. *Interference with British Postal System in the Persian Gulf.*—The compromise arrived at the end of 1904 still continues in practice. M. Naus has taken no steps to conclude the proposed agreement for parcels mails on the lines of the system in force in the Ottoman dominions, and is suspected of an intention to raise the whole question at the Postal Conference which will meet at Rome in the spring of 1906.

This disposes of the grievances set forth by the Government of India in the beginning of 1905. While some of them have been settled or compromised, others alleviated, and others aggravated, it may be well to enumerate here some of the chief cases which during the past year have formed the subject of fruitless representations to the Persian Government on the part of His Majesty's Legation:—

1. Seistan Water Award: Persian Government refuse to accept.
2. Petroleum Agreement with Bakhtiari Khans: Persian Government refuse to recognize.
3. Status of Bahreinis: Persian Government declare them to be Persian subjects, and in an official note accuse His Majesty's officers of consistently intriguing for the overthrow of the authority of Persia in her lawful territory.
4. Attack on Mr. Consul Grahame's escort at Mehrabad.
5. Illegal taxes in South Persia: The Central Government state that these are charges levied by guilds for actual services rendered, though the local authorities



maintain that they are Government taxes, and profess their inability to remit them without the consent of the Central Government. They are, moreover, expressly abolished by the terms of the "Règlement Légal."

6. Refusal to permit the import of additional arms for the defence of His Majesty's Consulates at Meshed and in Seistan.

7. Burning of the Seistan Mission buildings at Kuhak without giving the stipulated written undertaking to re-erect them if required, and without informing His Majesty's Consul of their intention to do so. (Apology accepted.)

8. Attitude with regard to the grain embargo on the Karun.

9. Refusal to settle outstanding British claims, especially those of Bushire, many of which have now been outstanding for from five to ten years.

10. Failure to take the necessary steps for restoring order in the Government of Fars, though constantly warned of the inevitable result of their inaction.

11. Refusal to grant to the Bakhtiari Khans permission to punish Kuhgelu tribesmen coming across the border into their territory to plunder on the Bakhtiari road.

12. Insistence by the Persian Government on their right to build a customs station within the area occupied by the British telegraph station at Henjam.

13. Refusal to grant the Nasratabad-Kuh-i-Malik Siah telegraph extension.

14. Taxation of the "Qasids" attached to His Majesty's Residency at Bushire.

15. Refusal to admit provisions for the Jask guard free of duty.

16. Beating of Residency "Qasids" by road guards in November and December. Complaint of His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz ignored.

17. Beating by Vazir of Fars of a witness sent to the Karguzari by His Majesty's Consulate, and refusal of the Central Government to order the offending official to apologize.

[9428]

No. 220.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 54.)

Sir,

*Tehran, February 27, 1906.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 53 of the 22nd instant, I have the honour to inclose copies of correspondence on the subject of Henjam.

Although I have as yet received no written reply to my note to the Persian Government of the 12th instant, the Mushir-ed-Dowleh verbally informed me that the Shah could only recognize the right of His Majesty's Government to the houses mentioned in the Concession granted in 1868, which makes no reference to land. His Excellency added that if His Majesty's Government desire land at Henjam a formal application must be made to the Shah in the manner usual in such cases.

I pointed out that the land claimed had been held for twelve years—that is, from 1868 till 1880—by the Indo-European Telegraph Department without any protest on the part of the Persian Government. A considerable amount of labour and money had been expended on the water supply. It was, I said, unreasonable to expect Europeans to live and work on an island without control over an extent of land sufficient for their various wants. I also verbally gave his Excellency the substance of your telegram No. 34 of the 20th instant, and on the following day addressed to him the note copy of which I have the honour to transmit herewith. I have received no reply from the Persian Government to my last note.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 220.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

*January 25, 1906.*

I HAVE received your note of the 22nd October, 1905, respecting Henjam, and sending me a map of the place. In reply, I have the honour to state that in the beginning, when the Persian Government gave permission for the construction of a telegraph-office at Henjam by the English, the permission was based on certain

regulations and maps which were at the time sent by the Foreign Office to the British Legation. In the conversation I had the honour to have with you a few days ago I requested you to send me the original map, in order that I might send orders to stop any measures which may be not in accordance with it. I am waiting for the map.

Inclosure 2 in No. 220.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

*February 12, 1906.*

I HAD the honour to receive your note of the 25th ultimo, stating that when the Persian Government in the first instance gave permission for the establishment of the British telegraph-office at Henjam, that permission was based on certain regulations and maps sent at the time by the Persian Foreign Department to His Majesty's Legation.

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I have been unable to find any such maps or map in the Legation archives. The only map I can discover connected with the Henjam telegraph-office is that now inclosed. It was apparently drawn by the late Sir J. Champain, then Assistant Director of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, and merely shows the position of the various buildings without reference to land. It was transmitted to Mirza Saïd Khan on the 23rd March, 1868. As your Excellency is aware, I communicated to you some time ago a map showing approximately the limits of the British telegraph station when it was abandoned in 1880.

I am directed by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State to inform your Excellency that His Majesty's Government consider that the acquiescence of the Persian Government in the actual fact of the occupation of the land at Henjam from 1868 to 1880 must be regarded as equivalent to the formal concession of the said land.

Inclosure 3 in No. 220.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

*February 20, 1906.*

I HAD the honour yesterday to inform your Excellency, in the course of our conversation regarding Henjam, that reports had reached His Majesty's Government from a reliable source that the Darya Begi intended to proceed to that island to force the resident Arabs to pay taxes or to expel them in case of disobedience.

Your Excellency denied all knowledge of such an intention on the part of the Governor of the Gulf Ports, and promised to inquire from the Grand Vizier if his Highness had given such instructions.

As I had the honour to inform your Excellency, it is, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, desirable that the limits of the British telegraph station at Henjam shall be satisfactorily settled, and I have already, in my note of the 12th instant, placed before your Excellency the views of His Majesty's Government with regard to the matter. Till this question is disposed of, His Majesty's Government must object to any coercive action against the Arabs resident on Henjam, as likely to endanger the British telegraph officials in charge of the station, and in the event of the Darya Begi or any other Persian official attempting to take such measures, His Majesty's Government will be compelled to send a ship of war to the island.

There is, as I explained to your Excellency, much excitement among the Arabs, who apparently recognize the Sultan of Muscat as their Sovereign. In these circumstances I hope that the Persian Government will refrain from any measure which might lead to regrettable consequences.

As soon as a satisfactory agreement has been reached regarding the limits of the telegraph station, I am to state that His Majesty's Government will be prepared, should the Persian Government so desire, to notify to the Arab community their recognition of Persian sovereignty, and will endeavour to obtain their acquiescence.

Inclosure 4 in No. 220.

*Major Cox to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

Sir, *Bushire, January 12, 1906.*  
WITH reference to previous correspondence on the subject of jurisdiction at Henjam, I have the honour to forward for information a copy of the inclosed letter.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) P. Z. COX.

Inclosure 5 in No. 220.

*Residency Agent, Lingah, to Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.*

(Translation.) *January 3, 1906.*  
I HAVE heard that his Excellency the Darya Begi Amir Tooman, Governor of Gulf Ports, and Haji Mahomed Moin-ut-Tujjar had directed Sheikh Hassan-bin-Mahomed Zabit, of Kishm Island, to instruct the Arabs living at Henjam Island to pay the Customs authorities the revenue or any other taxes demanded by the latter. As directed, Sheikh Hassan addressed Sheikh Ahmad-bin-Abeid, head of the above-mentioned Arab tribe, and received a reply from him to this effect:—

"It is eighty years since we settled in this island under the protection of Syed Thoweini and Syed Turki and Syed Faisal, the present Sultan of Muscat, and we will neither refuse nor yield except by his orders, and we are not under the protection of the Darya Begi or the Moin-ut-Tujjar."

This letter reached Sheikh Hassan at Lingah, and he produced it to his Excellency the Darya Begi. His Excellency intends proceeding to India to have his eyes and his teeth seen to, and he proposes to visit the island on his return and subdue the Arabs by every possible means, or expel them from that place. I have heard that he has taken the letter from Sheikh Hassan, and represented the matter by wire or post to Tehran, via Bushire. I have obtained a copy of the letter from Sheikh Hassan confidentially, and I beg to inclose the same for your information.

Inclosure 6 in No. 220.

*Sheikh Ahmed-bin-Abeid to Sheikh Hassan of Kishm.*

(Translation.) *Shawal 25, 1325 (December 22, 1905).*  
YOU have frequently addressed me communications, to which I have duly replied.

I beg to inform you that it is now about eighty years since we settled in this island under the protection of Syed Thoweini and Syed Turki (of Muscat), and that we are under the protection of Syed Faisal at present, and we do not wish to be protected by the Darya Begi and the Moin-ut-Tujjar or others, and we will neither refuse nor yield except by his (Syed Faisal's) orders. This is a categorical answer, and no further reply is required.

[9429]

No. 221.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 55.)

Sir, *Tehran, February 28, 1906.*  
WITH reference to my telegram No. 12 of the 12th ultimo I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of correspondence regarding the detention and beating of the two messengers who carry despatches between His Majesty's Consulate at Shiraz and His Majesty's Consulate-General at Bushire.

You will see from Mr. Grahame's Report\* that he is a little doubtful as to the truth of the depositions made by the messengers. In the case of evidence given by

\* Consul Grahame's No. 9, January 31, not printed.

Oriental it is always necessary to make considerable allowance for exaggerations, not to say intentional lying, and in the present instance it would appear probable that the men were stopped and struck, but not actually tied up by the feet as they at first stated. The tufangchis, or roadguards, stationed at various places between Shiraz and Bushire, have the worst possible reputation for outrages on travellers, and I have little doubt that in the main the story told by the messengers is correct. What is even more unsatisfactory is the attitude of the Fars authorities regarding the case. Whether the complaint made by our messengers was true or false, it was the obvious duty of the Sardar-i-Akram to hold an immediate inquiry. Far from doing so it appears that he practically paid no attention to Mr. Grahame's repeated representations.

The Mushir-ed-Dowleh states in his note, copy of which I inclose, that he has specially instructed the Fars authorities to pay due attention to the representations of His Majesty's Consul, and I trust that this order will produce some effect.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 221.

(Translation.) *Mr. E. Grant Duff to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

*February 15, 1906.*  
I HAD the honour on the 23rd December last, to draw your attention to the fact that the two messengers who carry the Consular mail bags between Shiraz and Bushire had been stopped and beaten by the roadguards stationed at various places between those towns to protect travellers.

I have now received a full report from His Majesty's Consul with regard to the matter which is to the following effect:—

On the 22nd November last, Mr. Grahame informed the Karguzar that the Residency Qasids complained that they had been twice forcibly detained on the road, and that at Churoun one of them Abdullah, the elder, had been twice struck by a tufangchi.

The Karguzar was requested to investigate the matter and to issue a special order to the roadguards not to detain the Residency messengers, should they desire to travel at night. The Karguzar replied that instructions in the sense desired had been sent direct to the roadguards, but he ignored Mr. Grahame's complaint as to the detention and beating of the messengers.

On the 24th November last, Mr. Grahame again addressed a note to the Karguzar demanding an inquiry. No answer was sent to Mr. Grahame's communication, although the Karguzar informed him in conversation that the Deputy-Governor had instructed him to inquire from His Majesty's Consulate the name of the tufangchi who had struck Abdullah.

On the 13th December, the Qasid Abdullah, the elder, reached Shiraz and reported that he had again been molested and beaten by tufangchis. His statement was taken in writing, and he was sent together with a copy of the statement to the Karguzari. A special pass for messengers was at the same time asked for and granted, but again no attention was paid to Mr. Grahame's request for an inquiry nor up to the 31st January of the present year had any reply been sent to Mr. Grahame's communication.

As your Excellency is aware, it has unfortunately been my duty on several occasions during the last few months to draw your attention to the discourteous attitude of the Fars authorities towards His Majesty's Consulate. I am confident that your Excellency will agree that it was clearly the duty of these authorities at once to investigate any complaint officially brought to their notice by Mr. Grahame, and especially promptly to inquire into a case affecting the inviolability of messengers in the employment of a foreign and friendly Government, and carrying despatches for that Government when they were as alleged stopped and beaten.

Now that the principal officials in Fars have been changed, I trust that the Persian Government will take steps to render the roads in that province and generally in Southern Persia secure for travellers and merchants. I would also express the hope that the Vazir Makhsus will issue strict orders to his subordinates to pay due attention to such representations as Mr. Grahame may be obliged to make in the interest of British subjects or British protected persons in the Province of Fars.

Inclosure 2 in No. 221.

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

February 20, 1906.

I HAVE received your note of the 15th instant, informing me of the contents of the reports received by you from the British Consulate at Shiraz, respecting the statements made by Abdullah Buzurg, as to his being beaten twice by the road tufangchis. I have written and also telegraphed to the Fars authorities respecting this matter, and have especially drawn their attention to the last paragraph of your note stating that they should pay due attention to the just representations made by the British Consul.

[9432]

No. 222.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 58.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 28, 1906.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 30 of the 14th instant and to previous correspondence, I have the honour to inclose copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz, forwarding the sealed statements of the muleteer who was sent by him to give evidence before the authorities of Fars in a case of robbery of British-owned goods, and beaten by order of the Sardar-i-Akram, Deputy Governor of Shiraz.

You will see that the muleteer who was beaten was not, as stated by the Persian Minister (see your telegram No. 23) with the caravan at the time of the robbery. He had handed over the care of the mules and their loads to his brother, and had, it would appear, a perfect right to do this. On arrival at Shiraz the muleteer gave the consignee of the goods notice of the robbery, and the latter, in accordance with Persian custom, duly informed the landlord of the district where the theft occurred.

I respectfully submit that the statements of the Persian Minister, even if they were accurate, have no bearing on the case. The point at issue seems to be whether the Persian authorities have the right, without previously communicating with the Consulate concerned, to beat a witness sent by a Consular officer to give evidence in a case in which the interests of a foreign subject are involved.

I am confident that no Legation here would tolerate the action of the Shiraz authorities, and in the light of recent events, the Sardar-i-Akram's statement that he beat the muleteer "to please the Consul" is somewhat surprising. No apology has, as far as I am aware, been as yet offered to Mr. Grahame.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 222.

*Consul Grahame to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 10.)

Sir,

Shiraz, February 7, 1906.

WITH further reference to your telegram No. 9 and to my telegram No. 16 in reply, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith inclosed copies of a statement made to me on the 2nd October, 1905, by Seyyid Khoda Rahm and of a paper then produced to me by him purporting to be sealed by the Chiefs of the local road guards, and bearing date of the 12th Rejib, 1323 (12th September, 1905).

The defence put forward on behalf of the Sardar-i-Akram by the Persian Minister in London appears to err on the side of trying to prove too much. It is admitted by the muleteer Seyyid Khoda Rahm that he had left the goods confided to his charge, but there would be nothing contrary to local custom in his handing them over to a subordinate (in this case his brother), he himself remaining ultimately responsible for them.

It is possible that his brother may have been sleeping at the time the theft occurred, which you will note was apparently on the 11th August, time mid-day, or thereabouts.

The caravan appears to have left Kazeroun in the early morning, and to have unloaded at Dashti-barm (where there is a regular unloading place), a distance of rather over 4 farsakhs (say, 16 miles) from Kazeroun. I understand from inquiries recently made that there is a tufangji post within half a farsakh of this spot. While writing the draft of this despatch I have been interrupted by the consignee of the Foods, a certain Hajji Muhammad Sadiq, and by the muleteer Seyyid Khoda Rahm. From the former I understand that, on arrival of the goods in Shiraz, Seyyid Khoda Rahm gave him notice of the theft, and that he himself notified it in writing to Hajji Azam-us-Sultaneh, who is the landlord of the district in which the theft occurred, and as such, according to Persian custom, responsible for robberies committed in it.

The muleteer having given notice of the theft to the consignee and the latter to the landlord, the muleteer was, I think—having regard to Persian custom—discharged of the duty of reporting it to the Shiraz authorities (Sardar-i-Akram).

The contention, therefore, that the delay in reporting the theft constituted a fault in the muleteer Seyyid Khoda Rahm punishable by a flogging (stated to have been severe) would appear to be inadmissible, though it might, perhaps, be urged as against the consignee who elected to refer to the landlord of the district rather than to the Vazir of Fars.

I further inclose a second statement of the muleteer Seyyid Khoda Rahm taken down to-day in writing in my presence and sealed by him.

This statement explains the date of the undertaking given in writing by the local tufangjis.

It further goes to show that the Sardar was aware that the man whom he ordered to be beaten was not on the spot at the time of the robbery.

As regards the motives alleged by his Excellency the Persian Minister to have actuated the Sardar-i-Akram, I am convinced that you will be as much surprised as I myself am to learn his Excellency the Sardar-i-Akram's sudden solicitude "to please the Consul," where repeated earnest representations regarding the misconduct of road guards his Excellency has systematically treated with disregard for more than eighteen months.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) GEORGE GRAHAME.

Inclosure 2 in No. 222.

*Statement of Seyyid Khoda Rahm, Muleteer of Kazeroun, to British Consulate.*

I STATE that my brother, Seyyid Kurban Ali, was with the mules, and, as my brother stated, in the Dashti-barm district (Abdoni district), which is an unloading place. The mules came in the morning from Kazeroun and Pul-ab-Guench, and arrived at Dashti-barm at midday. When they wanted to load up for Mian Kotal they saw that a bale of piece-goods had been taken from the top of the unloading place. We loaded up the corresponding bale to this and took it to the road guards, and said, "They have carried off the fellow bale to this, and we will not take this single bale. We will go and give the owner notice." The road guards implored us to take the one bale, and if they could find the bale that had been taken, well and good, and otherwise they themselves would give the compensation for the one bale. The names of the road guards are Mollah Fathullah and Kerbelai Gholam Ali. This is what I heard from my brother, and he is now in Bushire, and has carried down tambakou for Hajji Khalil.

It happened thus, and Mollah Fathullah and Gholam Ali asked for twenty days' delay, and they have given us a writing, which is in our hands.

(Seals of Seyyid Khoda Rahm and of Kurban, muleteer, of Kazeroun, who was with the caravan.)

Inclosure 3 in No. 222.

*Writing of Mollah Fathullah and Agha Gholam Ali.*

WERE present the Headmen and villagers of Abdoni.

In regard of one bale of piece-goods stolen in the Kallani district, as the Abdonis



and the Kallanis differed, Azim-us-Sultaneh had written to Hajji Khan requesting him to send a "maamoor," who should be both "maamoor" and expert on behalf of both parties. The "maamoor" came, and decided that the theft had been in the Kallani district; and as Seyyid Khoda Rahm had insisted in respect of one bale of piece-goods, twenty days' delay was requested of him, at the expiration of which time, in whichever of the two districts it should be proved, that district should be responsible.

These few words have been written by way of a deed of delay.

(On verso seals of Mollah Fathullah and  
Kerbelai Gholam Ali.)

Inclosure 4 in No. 222.

*Second Statement of Seyyid Khoda Rahm, Muleteer, regarding Theft of one bale Piece Goods, property of Messrs. Dixon, in Dashti-barm.*

THE loads were confided to me myself, in Bushire, but as I had business in Shiraz I came two days ahead of the caravan from Kazeroun to Shiraz, and I intrusted the loads in Kazeroun to my brother, Seyyid Kurban Ali, and, four or five days after my arrival in Shiraz, Seyyid Kurban Ali arrived, and immediately on arrival of the loads I went and gave notice to Muhammad Sadiq Shustari. Two or three days later the Hajji wrote a note to his Highness Azim-us-Sultaneh, and sent it by his man, together with me, to his Highness Azim-us-Sultaneh. Azim-us-Sultaneh at first abused me, and then, the next day but one after, gave his reply. I took it to Hajji Muhammad Sadiq, and they sent me to Kallani-Abdoni to get the merchandize back. About nine days after receipt of news of robbery I arrived at Abdoni, and after one day—during which they begged me to grant them delay—I went to Bushire, and about ten or twelve days later I returned to Abdoni, and then they gave me a writing for [delay of] twenty days. I came to Shiraz and showed the writing to Hajji Muhammad Sadiq, and then produced it in the Consulate.

The first day I went with the Karguzar and servant (a Cossack) before the Sardar-i-Akrani. He made very brief inquiry as to the facts. The second day, as he was in a hurry, he put no question. The third day—which was the day he beat me—the inquiry lasted about half an hour. At first the Sardar questioned me for a few minutes as to where the goods had been stolen, and if it was by day or by night, and I also stated that I myself had not been there, but that my brother, Kurban Ali, was there. Then he referred me to Azim-us-Sultaneh, who made no inquiry from me and again returned me to the Sardar. The Sardar made no further inquiry from me. He at once called for sticks, and, after beating me, he wrote an order and gave it to the Cossack.

(Seal of Seyyid Khoda Rahm, muleteer.)

[9433]

No. 223.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 59.)

Sir,

*Tehran, March 1, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a monthly summary of events in Persia, which have not been recorded in separate despatches.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 223.

*Monthly Summary of Events in Persia, March 1, 1906.*

*Meshed.*

AS regards the repairs to the Meshed-Seistan telegraph line, the Governor-General of Khorassan is said to have positive information that they were carried out

by the Russians with Russian money, apparently with the consent of the Minister of Telegraphs at Tehran.

2. The Turks in Meshed have been much excited by accounts of outrages committed by Armenians at Tiflis. Alarming rumours of events at Tehran were also current in the town, where it was stated that the Shah had been deposed.

3. A disease, at first reported to be plague, broke out at Turbat-i-Sheikh Jam last month, but it was diagnosed as diphtheria by a Russian doctor who was sent to inquire into it, and subsequently Captain Battye, our Consulate Doctor at Meshed, was deputed to make investigations. Captain Smythe, Military Attaché at Meshed, who passed through Askhabad towards the end of January on his return to his post, brought a message to Major Sykes from the Governor of that town to the effect that he was sending 150 Cossacks with some doctors from Pul-i-Khatun to Turbat in connection with the outbreak, but as nothing more has been heard on the subject, it would seem that the project has fallen through. The Mushir-ed-Dowleh, when questioned, stated that no report had reached him of the dispatch of Russian Cossacks.

4. M. Klemm, the new Russian Consul-General, is not expected to take up his post till the autumn. Meanwhile M. Reschetoff, frightened, it is said, by the reports of plague in Seistan, has left, leaving a very junior officer, M. de Giers, in charge. Information has reached Major Sykes that the store of arms handed over by M. Reschetoff amounts to between 400 and 500 rifles.

5. It has also been reported that 900 rifles were being smuggled into Seistan by the Russians, and that these passed Meshed in December. The Mushir-ed-Dowleh has telegraphed to the Persian Commissioner now in Seistan, telling him to look out for these.

6. His Majesty's Consul-General has secret information that, in addition to the land they have already acquired at Takkiabad, the Russians are trying to purchase large tracts to the north and north-east of Meshed.

7. The Japanese traveller, whose movements have been reported, left Meshed for Seistan, arriving at Bandan on the 6th February.

*Seistan.*

1. The Yamin-i-Nizam has been recalled from Seistan, and is, it is said, to be sent to Lahijan, on the western frontier, presumably in connection with the dispute with the Turks. He is to return eventually to Seistan, where his place is meanwhile to be taken by the Itisham-ul-Wazara. The Karguzar has also been recalled, and M. Molitor, of the Customs, is proceeding on leave in March.

2. The outbreak of plague, and the arrangements for preventing its spread, are separately reported.

3. As a sequel to the murder of the Persian Customs official at Yezdan, which was reported in last month's summary, the headless corpses of eight Persians have recently been found near that place. They were apparently on their return from Herat, whither they had gone in connection with a question of robbery. This part of the frontier generally is at present much disturbed.

*Birjand.*

Some local excitement has been caused owing to a Russian Armenian employed on the telegraph line being found in company with a Mahomedan woman. After being soundly beaten the pair were handed over to the authorities by a righteously-indignant priesthood, and it was at first suggested that the man should be made to expiate his offence by becoming a convert to Islam. For this, however, he demanded an increase in his salary, and it was eventually decided that he should be deported to Russia instead.

*Kerman.*

Colonel Stewart, who has been appointed His Majesty's Consul at Kerman, arrived there on the 10th January.

M. Miller, the Russian Consul, left on the 26th January, the local report being that he was going to Bandar Abbas. He has been appointed first dragoman to the Russian Legation at Tehran, and is probably now on his way to take up his post.

[1618]

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*Yezd.*

Prince Amatouni, the Russian Commercial Agent, was in Yezd at the beginning of the year, where he bought samples of the principal goods to be found in the bazaar, and took notes of the names of the leading merchants. From there he went to Kerman, and afterwards to Bandar Abbas.

*Ahwaz.*

1. Captain Lorimer, who has been on leave, returned to Ahwaz at the end of December, and took over the Vice-Consulate from Major Morton, R.E.

2. With reference to the report of fighting in Luristan, mentioned in last month's summary, it appears that a party of Lurs from the neighbourhood of Birijird, under the leadership of Shahab-i-Lashker, entered the Direkvena country, and, after a severe fight, in which they were reinforced by a party of Sagvends sent by Khanjan Khan, they made their way through to Dizbol, where he was well received by the Salar Muazzim, Governor of Shuster.

3. Mr. Reynolds, of the D'Arcy Oil Syndicate, left Ahwaz for the oil-fields at the end of December, taking with him a large amount of plant and an enormous quantity of material, gradually brought up and landed at Ahwaz. Canadian drillers and navvies are also being brought into the country. Unfortunately, however, the deposition of the former Ilkhani and Ilbegi, of the Bakhtiaris, and the appointment of Haji Ali Kuli Khan as Chief of the tribe, has thrown the whole country into a state of disorder; the roads are unsafe, and fighting has taken place between the adherents of the different Chiefs. The Oil Syndicate have already had difficulties about the guards with which the Bakhtiaris had agreed to provide them, and their party have been urged to quit the scene of their work. The late Ilkhani and Ilbegi are now in Tehran, and the arrival of Haji Ali Kuli Khan is expected shortly, when it is hoped that some arrangement will be come to by which at least the maintenance of order in the country will be assured.

4. The Moin-ut-Tujjar lately brought out an engineer—a Mr. McCormick—from England to advise him regarding various projects which he contemplates. He visited with him the Island of Hormuz and the sulphur deposits in Kishm, in neither of which places Mr. McCormick considered that a paying industry could be started. He was afterwards called upon to give advice as to the damming of the Karun at Shuster or Ahwaz, the building of a light railway from Mohammerah to Shuster, and other schemes for tramways or roads. Mr. McCormick thought that much might be done to utilize the water power available at Shuster, and strongly advocated the construction of a light railway from Mohammerah to that town, which would, he said, be inexpensive and easy to construct. The Moin-ut-Tujjar, however, objected, on the ground that it would offend the religious susceptibilities of the people.

*Khurramabad.*

It is reported that, after the departure of the Firman Firma, serious disorders took place in the town, the agitation being directed against the Deputy-Governor. The town was in a state of commotion for some time, the bazaars were closed, and all business was at a standstill.

*Bandar Abbas.*

The question regarding the cable-house (see last month's Summary) is still unsettled, and meanwhile the wire cannot be used. The Darya Begi, Governor of the Gulf ports, is now at Bandar Abbas, and the Director of Persian Telegraphs, from Bushire, is inquiring into the matter. No further steps will be taken pending the receipt of his opinion, which is expected shortly.

*Shiraz.*

No recent aggressions on the Bushire road have been reported, but the number of caravans using it is comparatively small. The posting arrangements between Ispahan and Shiraz are at present extremely bad, and at some stages horses are not procurable. The local postal authorities are now making an effort to remedy this.

*Ispahan.*

Prince Dabija has returned to his post as Russian Consul at Ispahan. M. Tcherkine, who has been acting for him, has received orders to go to Bombay to relieve M. Klemm, pending the arrival of the newly-appointed Consul-General.

A German merchant has been for some time in Ispahan trying to introduce synthetically manufactured indigo in place of the Indian product.

*Resht.*

large number of priests and theological students have taken sanctuary, as a protest against the return of the Prince Azad-ul-Mulk as Governor-General.

*Tabreez.*

A telegram from Tabreez has been received to the effect that reports have recently been current of the disappearance and murder of several Armenians. In reply to inquiries, the Karguzar said that the body of a murdered man, said to be that of an Armenian who had disappeared a fortnight before, had lately been found near the town. Armenians have been requested to avoid, as far as possible, going to the bazaars during the first half of Muharram, and all necessary measures have been taken to check disturbances. Some uneasiness prevails in the town.

Mr. Wratishaw left Urmi on the 23rd February, and expects to be back in Tabreez by the end of the month.

*Astrabad.*

There is much satisfaction in Astrabad over the removal from the Governorship of the Sardar Afkham, who has arrived in Tehran. His successor is said to be the Azam-ud-Dowleh.

*Tehran.*

The Shah, who is in relatively good health, has spent most of the month at Dosahantepé, a shooting-box near the town. The Naib-us-Saltaneh, a younger brother of the Shah, has been appointed Minister of War. This is generally considered a severe blow to the Grand Vizier. The Naib was Minister of War and Governor of Tehran in the time of Nasr-ud-Din Shah. Mr. Grant Duff and Colonel Douglas called on His Imperial Highness and congratulated him on his appointment. The Naib did not seem to think any great improvement in the army possible.

Moharram began on the 25th February, but the town is still quiet.

Sardar-i-Kul has been appointed to command the troops in Azerbaijan.

Nayer-ed-Dowleh is at present Governor of Tehran.

The Grand Vizier is confined to his house with gout.

## Inclosure 2 in No. 223.

Matters dealt with in separate Despatches.

Matters dealt with.	Number and Date of Despatch.
Dr. Odling's death .. .. .	No. 38 of February 20, 1906.
Mint Statistics for 1905 .. .. .	No. 7, Commercial, of February 22, 1906.
Dismissal of Seraidar .. .. .	No. 40 of February 23, 1906.
Commercial Mission's Report and suggestions of Indian Government .. .. .	No. 41 " 24, "
Ismail Yezdi case .. .. .	No. 44 " 26, "
Kuh-i-Mahk Shah extension .. .. .	No. 45 " 26, "
Urmi Mollah and signallers on Meshed-Seistan line .. .. .	No. 46 " 26, "
Urmi murders .. .. .	No. 47 " 27, "
	No. 8, Co-commercial, of February 22, 1906.
Plague in Seistan .. .. .	No. 6, Commercial, of February 9, 1906.
	No. 52 of February 27, 1906.
Persian loans .. .. .	No. 48 " 27, "
Status of Bahreinis .. .. .	No. 51 " 27, "
Persia in 1905 .. .. .	No. 53 " 27, "
Beating of Bushire Residency Qasids .. .. .	No. 55 " 28, "
Henjam .. .. .	No. 54 " 27, "
Persian Government's demand that foreigners should carry night passes in Tehran .. .. .	No. 56 " 28, "
Pay of Legation sowars .. .. .	No. 57 " 28, "
Beating of witness from Consulate by Vazir of Fars .. .. .	No. 58 " 28, "
Perso-Turkish frontier .. .. .	No. 50 " 27, "

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No. 224.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*(No. 60.)  
Sir,*Tehran, February 28, 1906.*

SINCE the return of the Mollahs from Shah Abdul Azim, as recorded in my despatch No. 23 of the 30th ultimo, little of importance has occurred in Tehran, but, as I had the honour to inform you in my telegram No. 48, it is generally believed that there may be disturbances during the month of Moharran, which began last Sunday evening.

It would appear that the Ulema are waiting to see whether the Shah will carry out the reforms which they have demanded, and a prominent Mujtehid recently stated in my presence that if the Persian Government did not take the necessary steps by the Noruz (March 22nd) pressure would be brought to bear to make them fulfil their obligations.

The state of affairs is much complicated by the financial situation, which is becoming daily more serious. As I had the honour to report, the French Chargé d'Affaires recently told me, on the authority of the Director of the Russian Bank, that the Russian Government were insisting on the dismissal of the present Grand Vizier, and had declined to consider the question of a loan unless the negotiations were carried on through M. Naus, who, it is stated, has been summoned from Constantinople. It would appear, however, from the Grand Vizier's application for the 150,000*l.* offered by His Majesty's Government last July, that up to the present he has not succeeded in getting financial help from Russia. Unless his Highness contrives to raise money, his continuance in office cannot be prolonged much longer, although the evil day may be put off by the sale of Governorships, and by extorting money from various rich men. No one seems to have any distinct idea whom the Shah may appoint in place of the Ain-ed-Dowleh should he fall. The names most frequently mentioned are the late Atabeg, Ali Ashger Khan, whose record is well known to you, and the Nizam-es-Saltaneh, Vazir of Azerbaijan under the Valiahd. The Nizam-es-Saltaneh, although some years ago, when Governor of Arabistan, he incurred the displeasure of His Majesty's Legation, is a comparatively enlightened man, and very anti-Russian. He

is, however, over seventy, and I do not know whether he would be equal to the laborious and thankless office of Grand Vizier.

As I have already reported, there is no doubt that the Ulema are receiving both moral, and what they much prefer, pecuniary support from high officials. About a fortnight ago the Minister of Commerce, who was for some years the representative of Persia in Brussels, was suddenly seized and transported to Yezd, papers having been discovered implicating him in the movement against the Government which is at present going on.

It is certain that, in Tehran, at least, the priesthood, merchants, and generally the well-to-do classes are slowly becoming aware that their Government is extremely bad; the example of Russia is before their eyes, and every event in that country is eagerly watched. The document I had the honour to forward in my despatch No. 24 of the 31st ultimo would seem to show that there are men among the malcontents who have a clear idea of what is required to effect a reform in the administration. Whether Persians are capable of establishing an efficient Government is, I think, doubtful, but it is certain that discontent with the present state of things is widespread and growing, and may before long come to a head.

The immediate future will probably depend on the attitude of Russia. If she can impose such conditions in return for a loan as practically to make Persia her vassal, the present unsatisfactory Government may blunder on for some time to come. If Russia also refuses financial assistance, I do not see how Persia can avoid bankruptcy, followed by foreign financial control, and probably preceded by a period of internal disturbance. I presume that in refusing Persia a loan His Majesty's Government have carefully considered what may be the result of a total breakdown in the already worn out administrative machine of this country.

I have, &amp;c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

[9436]

No. 225.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*(No. 62.)  
Sir,*Tehran, March 1, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz regarding affairs in that town.

As I had the honour to report in my telegram of the 9th ultimo, on the 8th ultimo it was officially announced that Iqbal-ed-Dowleh, brother of the Vazir-i-Makhsus, had been appointed Governor-General of Fars. When it was subsequently proclaimed from the pulpit of one of the principal mosques that the Prince Shoa-es-Saltaneh would not return, owing to the state of his health, the news was received with shouts of "Alhamdullillah!" (Thank God!). The town was illuminated, and on the following Saturday the shops reopened. It now appears that the announcement of the appointment of Iqbal-ed-Dowleh was the result of a misapprehension on the part of the authorities of Fars, and that, at all events for the present, the Vazir-i-Makhsus will continue to carry out the duties of Governor-General of the province. Of his capacity as an administrator I know little, as he has generally lived in Tehran, and has held offices about the Shah's person; but I have personally been acquainted with him for many years, and believe him to be a humane man, with as much sense of justice as a Persian ever has.

On the whole, during the greater portion of February the condition of Shiraz has been normal; but on the 27th ultimo Mr. Grahame reported that a deputation of traders and others waited on him, and complained that no clear intimation of the High Commissioner's status had been given them, and that nothing had been done as yet to redress their grievances. They announced their intention of taking "bast" at His Majesty's Consulate on the 7th March next.

Mr. Grahame pointed out, in reply, that the recent fall in the price of bread and the improvement in the security of the Bushire road were proofs of the High Commissioner's efforts to introduce reforms, and he also promised to bring their grievances to his Excellency's notice.

I do not think it likely that any attempt will be made to force the Shoa-es-Saltaneh again on the people of Fars. Should His Highness return there he will almost certainly be killed; but it is only natural that the Shah should do what he can

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to save his face. It is, I think, probable that, unless further disturbances on a large scale occur, the Shoa-es-Saltaneh will remain here, with the title of Governor-General of Fars, and the Vazir-i-Makhsus will really administer the province. The Prince has, however, been so oppressive and is so cordially hated that the fact of his retaining even a titular connection with Fars may be resented by his late subjects.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 225.

*Consul Grahame to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 8.)

Sir,

*Shiraz, January 27, 1906.*

WITH reference to correspondence on the situation at Shiraz, ending with my telegram No. 9, I have now the honour to inclose herewith copy of a letter addressed by me yesterday to Mirza Ibrahim in the hope of deterring the malcontents from taking refuge in this Consulate.

In wording this letter I have purposely made a slight and vague allusion only to our procedure in cases of persons taking "bast," and have dwelt rather upon the disadvantage which might result to the malcontents from such a step in the present case.

Since the arrival yesterday morning of the Vazir-i-Makhsus there has been a cessation of the clamour and firing, which had been very vigorously maintained since 4 P.M. on the 25th instant.

From the Consulate munshi who carried my letter of congratulation to the Vazir-i-Makhsus an hour or two after his arrival I learnt that the latter had sent his nephew (? Moiz-ul-Dowleh) to interview the leaders of the malcontents in the Shah Cheragh, but the crush had been so great that he was nearly suffocated and had to beat a retreat.

The tone of the reply letter brought to me, and still more so of the verbal messages accompanying it, was most friendly, and this tone was maintained in the interview of about forty minutes which I had this afternoon at Dilgusha. In the course of it the Vazir-i-Makhsus did not scruple to make several open threats at the Ain-ed-Dowleh and incidentally to belaud the ex-Atabeg.

In answer to inquiries as to my opinion of the Prince's administration, I pointed out that His Imperial Highness appeared to me to have left the reins in the hands of the Sardar, while he himself studied botany, physiology, &c., and that I could only guess at the enormities practised towards defenceless ryots from the action of the Fars authorities towards the British and Russian Governments in the matter of "rahdari."

Quoting the proverb that there is no smoke without fire, I said that I found it difficult to believe that the many complaints, exaggerated as some may be, were without a measure of justification.

The Vazir-i-Makhsus led me to understand that he is impressed with a sense of the injustices committed. He informed me that this evening he is to have a private meeting with the leaders of the movement, and hopes to induce them in a day or two to leave the Shah Cheragh and reopen the shops. He proposes, "after sending off the Sardar," to move into town and conduct inquiries into the various grievances. In answer to his appeal for my support, I replied that I was most ready to further his efforts, but that my difficulty lay in my inability to give an answer to a question put to me on so many sides as to the Prince's resignation. He then explained that the Central Government proposes, as soon as the malcontents have withdrawn from the shrine and their present defiant attitude, to assure them that the Prince will not return to Fars; and added that His Imperial Highness would probably continue to enjoy the title of Governor-General of Fars in Tehran, while the administration of the province would be confided to a Deputy-Governor on the spot.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) G. GRAHAME.

Inclosure 2 in No. 225.

*Consul Grahame to Mirza Ibrahim.*

*January 26, 1906.*

THE day before yesterday an honourable person, Moin-ul-Islam, informed me on your behalf that you and your friends have perhaps the intention of coming to this Consulate, and made some inquiries on this subject, which I answered verbally. I have, however, thought it well to repeat my answer in writing.

It is evident that, according to use and custom, admission to this Consulate is not refused to any one, great or small; but I would particularly express the hope that before you or your friends take a step which may be a cause of anger to His Imperial Majesty the Shah, and create coolness in the heart of His Majesty's Special Envoy, that you will most carefully consider the matter whether the result of such action will be profitable or injurious to the object which you have in view.

I am convinced that persons of good sense and political insight who have waited patiently for nearly three months will not in one hour throw away the fruit of their trouble; and, in my personal opinion, if you and the honourable persons who are with you were to take refuge in this Consulate, the prestige of the Persian Government and of the Church ("Millat") might in some measure be diminished.

In any case, I would request that, should you, after due consideration, decide to come to this Consulate, you will be kind enough, in all courtesy, to give me notice of your intention three days beforehand, in writing, so that I may give due notice to His Majesty's Legation and take the necessary steps.

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No. 226.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 63.)

Sir,

*Tehran, March 1, 1906.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 47 of the 18th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit copies of correspondence regarding the removal of the guards placed, in accordance with Agreement, to protect the works of the Oil Syndicate at Marmaten.

The appointment of the Sardar-i-Assad (Haji Ali Kuli Khan) as Ilkhani of the Bakhtiaris may lead to grave trouble. As I have already reported, the Samsam-es-Sultaneh (the late Ilkhani) and the Shahab-es-Sultaneh (the Ilbegi) are now in Tehran and have verbally informed me that they are exceedingly uneasy as regards the future and of the menace to British interests constituted by the disunion caused by the intrigues of the Sardar Assad. At their urgent request I addressed the note, copy of which I inclose, to the Grand Vizier, and you will see that his Highness states that he has taken the necessary measures to replace the guards.

It is stated that the Sardar Assad is coming to Tehran and in that event I shall do what I can to induce the Chiefs to come to some understanding, at all events as regards the Naphtha Agreement and the upkeep of the road.

From what I hear of the relations between the rival factions of the tribes, I fear this will be difficult. If I fail to persuade the Sardar Assad of the great danger to the tribe caused by the present disunion I propose, pending the receipt of your instructions, to give the Samsam-es-Sultaneh and the Ilbegi such support as I properly can without compromising their relations with the Persian Government. The Shahab-es-Sultaneh came to me last Tuesday night and I saw him alone. He confidentially informed me that if the Sardar Assad continued his present intrigues, he proposed on his return to Bakhtiristan to have recourse to arms. I declined to give any opinion on the wisdom of such a step; but I warned him that civil war would hardly be to the advantage of his faction, unless they were so strong as to render victory a practical certainty. He volunteered the information that the Chiefs of his faction believed the end of the Persian Government and the Kajar dynasty was rapidly approaching, and that the meeting of a representative assembly in Russia would find its echos in this country. In these circumstances the Samsam-es-Sultaneh and himself were of opinion that strong measures alone could save the tribe, in the midst of the internal disturbances which would certainly follow any break up of the present administrative system. He added that, as far as he could judge, a conspiracy was on foot in Tehran in which not only the Mollahs but many leading Persians were implicated.



I, of course, made no remark regarding the situation here; but it was interesting to hear the views of a powerful tribal Chief on political affairs.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure 1 in No. 226.

Major Cox to Mr. E. Grant Duff.

(No. 11. Confidential.)

Sir,

Bushire, January 26, 1906.

IN continuation of my telegrams Nos. 10 and 11 of the 23rd instant, with reference to the neglect by the Bakhtiari Khans of the provisions of their Agreement with the Oil Syndicate regarding the safeguarding of its work and property, I have the honour to forward herewith for your information copies of the letter, with its inclosures, which I have received from His Majesty's Vice-Consul, Ahwaz, on the subject.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) P. Z. COX.

Inclosure 2 in No. 226.

Vice-Consul Lorimer to Major Cox.

Sir,

Ahwaz, January 17, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to forward inclosed copies of letters received this morning from Mr. Reynolds, of the Oil Syndicate, with whom I have also just had a conversation.

I should suggest that the Legation be telegraphed to in the sense requested by Mr. Reynolds, except in so far as reference to the Persian Government is suggested, a course which I do not think could be considered otherwise than as at once futile and unwise in the last degree. In conversation Mr. Reynolds admitted this view.

There are two questions involved, the first and lesser being the method of remunerating the guards. Under the form of Agreement which has been made, constant trouble is to be anticipated. The Khans have pocketed the money, and it is not in the nature of these people to make arrangements by which subordinates receive their dues. It has, I believe, been exactly the same thing in supplying labour for the repair of the road. The second and more serious matter is the grave (*sic*) among the Khans themselves following the change of the official heads of the tribe.

Two powerful factions have been formed, and hostilities have been engaged (*vide* Diary of the 16th instant). I doubt the power of the new Ilkhani, the Sardar Assad, to guarantee the security of the party at Marmaten.

The situation of the parties is as follows:—

Of the signatories to the Agreement the Samsam and the Shahab-es-Sultaneh belong to one faction, and the Sardar Assad with, I believe, the Sarim-ul-Mulk, the owner of land at Marmaten, to the other.

As far as I can see, our only chance of arriving at a *modus vivendi* lies in putting aside altogether quasi-official relations (*e.g.*, in putting pressure on the Sardar Assad as Ilkhani to take action), and in approaching the three parties to the Agreement privately as such. The impossibility of carrying on work on the present haphazard conditions can be pointed out to them, and the importance of their own interests which are at stake, and they can be urged to try to come to some mutual understanding on this one affair of ours, which is in no way connected with their present disagreements.

Unfortunately, none of the Chiefs can be reached at present from here. The Sardar Assad has not yet come down to the plains, and it is problematic whether a letter could be got through to him. The other two are probably at Tehran. I shall, if possible, open communication with the Sardar Assad.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) LORIMER, Captain,  
His Majesty's Vice-Consul, Arabistan.

Inclosure 3 in No. 226.

Mr. Reynolds to Vice-Consul Lorimer.

Dear Sir,

Ahwaz, January 17, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to inclose copies of my letters of the 28th November and the 7th December, 1905, to the address of his Excellency the Ilkhani of the Bakhtiari, copies of which were sent to their Excellencies the Ilbegi and the Sardar Assad. When I informed you that, in the Agreement with these Chiefs, they are to receive quarterly in advance 500*l.* for safeguarding us and our works and property, you will recognize that I have a right to expect that which I have not yet had, *viz.*, an efficient guard capable of preventing my work being hindered by irresponsible tribesmen. I have shown you the two notes of my surveyor dated the 5th and 9th current, in the latter of which I am told that the representative of the Khans has written asking him to telegraph to me to unload my material at Shakhe, not in the Bakhtiari country at all. It is needless to say that I am not doing so, but I propose going on with my work, and if it is found necessary to engage guards I will do so and pay them myself, advising the three Khans named above that I have been obliged to do so. I now would ask you to be so good as to request the Political Resident, Bushire, to be so good as to wire to Tehran to the effect that guards not being supplied as per Agreement, copy of which is in the hands of the Legation, they will move the Persian Government to insist on the Ilkhani of the day supplying the necessary men; or, better still, should the Samsam-es-Sultaneh and the Shahab-es-Sultaneh be in Tehran and not deposed, that they kindly approach them and get them to instruct Sarim-ul-Mulk, who is probably on their side in this present trouble, to come himself or send down a responsible party to remain with us.

If a copy of the message is sent to him, the Sarim-ul-Mulk, to me at Ahwaz, via Bushire, I will see it through to him at Malamir, where I understand he is.

That you may appreciate the urgency of this to us, let me tell you that, should we have to leave our camp at Marmaten, after having transported there our machinery, we shall be thrown back in our work at least six months, and the loss of our property, which it will be impossible to remove, will be very considerable, and our prestige will suffer to an extent which only long time will efface from the recollection of these savages among whom we have to work.

It is then, under these circumstances, that I ask your help, and, trusting you may see your way to render me the assistance asked, I am, &c.

(Signed) G. B. REYNOLDS.

Inclosure 4 in No. 226.

Mr. Reynolds to Samsam-es-Sultaneh.

My dear Friend,

Chardine, November 28, 1905.

I AM writing to you, hoping that it may find you in good health, to wish you as pleasant a journey as may be possible, and that you and yours may arrive in Tehran safely without any accident and with as little discomfort and bad weather as possible.

I also write to tell you of my arrival here yesterday, travelling by way of Rud-i-zard and Maidovid, and I am leaving in camp at Marmaten my surveyor, who is engaged in making plans and sections of the ground near the springs of oil. After leaving you I went to Junagaon and thence to Ardal, and so wished good-bye to their Excellencies the Sardar Assad and the Ilbegi, Shahab-es-Sultaneh, and obtained their signatures on the receipt for the payment I made to you and them.

You will please convey to them, and accept yourself, my best thanks for the hospitality I enjoyed during my stay in the Chihar Mahal, which I shall always remember with pleasure. Personally, I wish you were coming this year to Ram Hormuz instead of going to Tehran, but it cannot be; so I must hope that this reaches you before you go, thus enabling you to pass such orders as you may find expedient on the following matter.

All the sowars who have accompanied me from the time I left Ardal expected me to pay them and to feed their horses, expressing themselves that they had no money themselves, having received none from those who sent them, adding that it



was the custom for English travellers to feed them and their horses, and to pay them when they were sent with any such traveller. In consequence of this, I not having paid them, I went to-day to see your Naib-ul-Hukumat at Ram Hormuz to tell him the state of affairs, namely, that the guards did not wish to stop with me, that, though not travelling by day, they declined to watch by night; and that Shabaz, whom you yourself had ordered to come with me to show me the routes into Maidun-i-Naphtun, had expressed himself desirous of leaving me at Ram Hormuz. The result of my interview with him was that I should write you this letter explaining the situation.

When at Kala-i-Tul, Jenab-i-Kuda Karim Khan told me that he had instructions to send with me ten horsemen as guards; but as I was leaving only my surveyor at Marmaten, for, say, a fortnight, after which more of my men would be there, I told him that it was, in my opinion, unnecessary to send so many and that four would be enough.

I therefore took four only, and, as they were discontented, I am allowing them to leave to-morrow, Shabaz having left to-day at Ram Hormuz. I took an order from the Naib-ul-Hukumat to the head of the village at Marmaten to supply watchmen to my surveyor to look after his camp at night, for which I have instructed him to pay, as his camp must be guarded, for he has with him valuable instruments, and the guards will have left; though they had been there, they would not have watched, as I have already mentioned.

Of course, had you not particularly told me, when I asked you, not to pay these men, I had been inclined to pay them, though I do not hold your authority to pay them, on your behalf or account; still, it is obvious they must be paid, and it is equally obvious that we must be guarded.

Under these circumstances, it is that I would trouble you to put the matter right, and, paying the men yourself, so cause them to be contented to remain with us; or else you authorize me to pay them on your behalf and account, you telling me the rate of pay they should receive. I am very sorry to have to trouble you in this matter, just as you are leaving for Tehran too, but you will understand that I cannot allow myself to have no guards.

Again wishing you a very pleasant journey, yours, &c.

(Signed) GEO. B. REYNOLDS.

*Note.* Sent by special messenger of the Naib-ul-Hukumat from Ram Hormuz to Shalamzar to catch the Samsam-es-Sultaneh before he left. Copy also sent by the same man to Shahab-es-Sultaneh and to Sardar Assad.

Inclosure 5 in No. 226.

*Mr. Reynolds to Samsam-es-Sultaneh.*

Dear Friend,

*Ahwaz, December 7, 1905.*

I ARRIVED here safely on the 2nd December, though shot at by the men of Sheikh Rashid at Shahke; about ten or fifteen shots were fired at me, they mistaking my caravan for your men coming to attack them. This happened on the 1st December. Fortunately no one was hurt.

On reaching this, I find a report current that you have died suddenly, which may God forbid! I do not, however, believe the report, for as we say in my country, "the wish is father to the thought" among these people who are your enemies.

Yesterday I received a letter from my surveyor, whom I left at Marmaten to survey the ground. He writes me as follows: that on the 1st December, for purposes of his work, he went near the village of Mahomet Tahir Khan, where he was told that "it is not permitted for you to travel in our country, and if you have not a guard I will break your head."

On the 2nd December two men from Mirza Jowad Sadur-ul-Ashraf came to him asking him by what order he had pitched his tent at Marmaten, and on the 3rd they kept troubling him by asking him by what order he worked in the land of Sarim-ul-Mulk, saying, "we will not let you work in this country." You will see that it is impossible to work among the wild men of these parts without a proper authority from you, and, as the delay in communicating with you is very great, I must beg that you will forthwith send such orders in writing as—being respected—will absolutely put an end to all behaviour such as I have described in this and my letter to you of the 28th November in the future.

Lest this should not reach you, you having gone to Tehran, I am sending a copy of it to his Excellency the Shahab-es-Sultaneh and his Excellency the Sardar Assad Haji Ali Kuli Khan, and regretting that this trouble should be caused to you, but it is no fault of mine.

Yours, &c.  
(Signed) GEO. B. REYNOLDS.

Inclosure 6 in No. 226.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Grand Vizier.*

(Translation.)

(After compliments.)

*February 18, 1906.*

I HAVE received information that the Salar Arfa has driven away the guards sent by the Samsam-es-Sultaneh to protect the oil wells. I therefore request your Highness to be so good as to send immediate orders to Morteza Kuli Khan and Moin-i-Homayun, at Ram Hormuz, to place a guard on the oil wells, and to direct Salar Arfa to desist from giving trouble.

Inclosure 7 in No. 226.

*Grand Vizier to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(Translation.)

*February 27, 1906.*

I HAVE received your note of the 18th instant respecting the guards of the oil wells. I have, as requested by you, telegraphed to the Salar Arfa, Morteza Kuli Khan, and the Moin-i-Homayun.

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No. 227.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 65.)

Sir,

*Tehran, March 2, 1906.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 44 of the 10th February, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a note which I have addressed to the Persian Government, informing them of the dispatch of 200 infantry to Robat.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

Inclosure in No. 227.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you that the Government of India, in view of the outbreak of plague in Seistan, are sending 200 infantry to Robat as a precautionary measure, and in order to render assistance to the Persian Government if required.

I have the honour to request your Excellency to inform the authorities of Khorassan and Seistan of the above, in order that no alarm may be caused locally.

*February 10, 1906.*

[9440]

No. 228.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir E. Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 66.)

Sir,

*Tehran, March 2, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you that M. A. de Speyer, Russian Minister at the Court, has been recalled. It is probable that his place will be filled by M. Hartwig, of the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, but a member of the Russian Legation recently informed me that this appointment had, as far as he knew, not been officially announced.

The reason of M. Speyer's recall is stated to be ill-health, and this may be partly the case. It is, however, no secret that the Russian Government have not been satisfied with his conduct of affairs, and especially with his management of his Legation, which has for the last year been the scene of most unedifying and almost public quarrels. About the time of the defeat of the Russian fleet by Admiral Togo, M. Speyer rather incautiously gave a small picnic to members of his staff and other Russian residents in Tehran. M. de Somow, his First Secretary, declined to attend, and shortly after a paragraph appeared in a Russian newspaper criticising the conduct of the Minister. M. Speyer accused M. Somow of being concerned in the matter, and since that time members of the Russian Legation have been divided into two factions.

This state of affairs has probably become known to the Russian Government, and I am told that several members of the Legation will be transferred elsewhere.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) EVELYN GRANT DUFF.

[9506]

No. 229.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 187.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, March 14, 1906.*

I HAVE the honour to state that M. Hartwig, the newly appointed Minister to Persia, and at present the Director of the Asiatic Department of the Foreign Office, called on me to day in order to inform me that the Emperor had signed the Ukase appointing him to Tehran. He expressed great satisfaction, and was good enough to say that he looked forward with pleasure to being able to co-operate with me in the good work of improving the relations between our countries. I said that I fully shared his feelings, and that I knew that it was the desire of His Majesty's Government that no untoward incident should arise to disturb our good relations. He said that it would be our business to put an end to the system of suspicion and hostility which had cost both countries so much, and he hoped that there would soon be a sensible improvement. I instanced your refusal to agree to the Persian demand for a loan, and he said that his Government also had returned a negative answer to the Persian appeal.

He observed that his new German colleague was likely to pursue a more energetic policy than his old friend Count Rex, who was now removed to China. The new German Minister had been Consul-General at Constantinople, where he was well known as an ardent advocate of the Bagdad Railway, as well as an energetic exponent of the Emperor's Turkish policy. He thought that this appointment indicated a possible departure from the passive attitude hitherto observed by Germany in Persia.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) CECIL SPRING-RICE.

[9711]

No. 230.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)*

(No. 67.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 19, 1906.*

FOLLOWING repeated to India

"The Russian Bank, aided by native bankers of Tabreez, has organized a run on the Imperial Bank of Persia.

"The bank seems well guarded, and the Manager states that there is no danger."

[9781]

No. 231.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 20.)*

(No. 68.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 20, 1906.*

BJRJAND quarantine

The dispatch of a Russian doctor to Brijand is confirmed by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

[9247]

No. 232.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, March 20, 1906.*

WITH reference to my letter of the 12th instant, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,\* concurring in the suggestion that the British Vice-Consul at Ahwaz should proceed to the Bakhtiari country in order to place himself in touch with the Chiefs, and report upon the condition of the Ahwaz-Ispahan road.

Sir E. Grey proposes, if Mr. Morley sees no objection, that instructions should be sent to Captain Lorimer to proceed to Ram Hormuz, as suggested, and that the Persian Transport Company should be informed accordingly.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GORST.

[9868]

No. 233.

*Persian Minister to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 21.)*

THE Persian Minister presents his compliments to his Excellency Sir Edward Grey, and has the honour of inclosing herewith the translation of a telegram he has received to-day, from his Excellency the Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

The Minister would have liked to have handed this telegram to Sir Edward Grey and to have discussed the matter with his Excellency, but as it was very urgent and important he thought it better to forward it at once to Sir Edward Grey, so that the necessary steps may be taken as soon as possible.

Should Sir Edward Grey wish to see the Minister, he will have much honour in calling at the Foreign Office, whenever, convenient to his Excellency.

*Persian Legation, March 20, 1906.*

*Inclosure in No. 233.*

*Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Persian Minister.*

(Translation.)

(Telegraphic.)

*March 20, 1906.*

A FEW days ago the Princess, wife of his Imperial Highness the Shoa-es-Saltaneh, was driving in Shiraz accompanied by a number of attendants. The Indian Sowars of the British Consulate were parading at a place which is public thoroughfare and a large crowd of people had gathered round to see them and were thus obstructing the traffic. Prince Edjal-ed-Dowleh, who was accompanying the Royal party, when he saw the crowd on the way rode in front wishing to disperse it a little in order to open a passage for the carriages. Mr. Graham, the British Consul, who was at a distance galloping forward and overtaking the Prince, uttered, in a most sharp manner, improper words in reference to him, and was very discourteous and harsh. Whereas, in the first place, the Indian Sowars had no right to parade in a public thoroughfare; and, in the second place, the Prince was in no way interfering with the Indian Sowars, and he was only wishing to open a passage through the crowd of lookers-on for the carriage conveying the Royal Family. The Consul had no right whatever to act so discourteously towards the Royal Family as he did on this occasion.

You will immediately seek an interview with his Excellency Sir Edward Grey, and will make an earnest request that Mr. Graham may be asked to apologize for his action, and you will request that he may also be asked to alter his mode and attitude.

• No. 211.

[1618]

3 (1)

[9906]

No. 234.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 21.)*

(No. 70.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 21, 1906.*

I AM informed by His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire that he has received a report from Vice-Consul in Arabistan to the effect that the Oil Syndicate has instructed its managing engineer in Persia not to ask the British Minister or Consular Powers for intervention, but to adopt a conciliatory attitude.

These instructions are characterized by both the Vice-Consul and the engineer as unwise and unworkable, and I concur in this view.

[10083]

No. 235.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 22.)*

Sir,

*India Office, March 21, 1906.*

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to state, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that he has learnt that the new telegraph line from Constantinople to Bagdad has been completed, and that telegrams are now being transmitted direct to Fao from Constantinople by this route.

In regard to the working of the line, I am to inclose a copy of a report by the Divisional Manager of the Eastern Telegraph Company at Athens; and, in view of the possibility of the Germans seeking to obtain a monopoly of the telegraphs between Constantinople and the Persian Gulf, I am to request that the suggestion contained in the letter from this Office of the 27th October, 1904, may be borne in mind.

I am, &amp;c.

(Signed) HORACE WALPOLE.

Inclosure in No. 235.

*Report by the Divisional Manager, Eastern Telegraph Company, Athens.*

THE Aleppo-Constantinople line has been working for some time now, but it has not escaped from the causes that broke down the other wires on the same poles.

The Turks, as already reported, expect brilliant results from that communication. How far this will be realized it cannot be said with certainty, but past experience and the frequent breakages of their Asiatic wires justify one in saying that the results will be rather doubtful, and with time, if the Turks are left alone, the line will fall back upon its position of last year.

In the event of failure, however, the Company must be prepared to see the Germans interest themselves in the concern, probably under disguise, with a view of taking possession of the line, to oppose which, I believe, the British Government should be approached in due course of time.

I will endeavour to obtain as much information as I can on the maintenance and progress of the line.

[10088]

No. 236.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 22.)*

(No. 72.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 22, 1906.*

GOVERNOR of Kain's finances.

Your telegram No. 61 of the 28th July, 1905.

According to information telegraphed by the British telegraph signaller at Birjand, the Shaikat-ul-Mulk, Governor of Kain, has renewed his request for a loan of 30,000 tomans. This amount the Russian Bank are said to be willing to advance.

[9868]

No. 237.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 44.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, March 22, 1906.*

PLEASE ascertain and report the facts of the following incident, which is stated by the Persian Minister to have occurred recently in Shiraz :—

While driving in Shiraz, the wife of the Shoa-es-Sultaneh encountered our sowars, who were drilling in the public thoroughfare surrounded by a large crowd. On Prince Edjlal-ed-Dowleh riding forward to open a passage for the carriages, His Majesty's Consul intervened, in a very harsh and discourteous manner. Persian Government complain of the discourtesy shown to member of the Royal Family, and maintain that the sowars had no right to parade on the public thoroughfare.

[10209]

No. 238.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 23.)*

(No. 73.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 23, 1906.*

THE Perso-Turkish frontier dispute would appear to be growing serious, and the Shah sent for me to-day in order to speak to me about it.

His Majesty first stated that he was at a loss to understand why Sir Nicholas O'Connor had declared at Constantinople that His Majesty's Government would remain neutral in the frontier dispute, seeing that England had for so long been the friend of Persia. Arbitration in this matter was the duty of Great Britain and Russia, and he earnestly hoped that, at a time when Persia was in serious difficulties, the good offices of His Majesty's Government would not be refused. Just as the friendship of Great Britain was more valued by Persia than that of Turkey, so His Majesty's Government must also set the friendship of Persia above that of Turkey, for Persia's policy was a constant one, whereas that of Turkey was ever changing. Moreover, many of the inhabitants of India were Sunnis, and therefore co-religionists of the Turks, and Turkey might therefore some day create difficulties in India.

In conclusion, the Shah sent compliments to the King, and expressed a hope that the traditional friendship existing between the two countries would not be forgotten by His Majesty; he relied on His Majesty's good-will.

The Shah received the Russian Chargé d'Affaires just before me, and probably conveyed to him a similar message.

I was informed by the Minister of the Court that the Persians were forming a large camp near the Russian frontier in Azerbaijan in order to protect the Turkish force now in the disputed territory from the possible attacks of Persian tribes.

A Persian Commissioner was being sent to Lahijan, where I understood the Turkish Commission was to meet him.

I would venture to suggest that compliance with the Shah's request, if entertained by His Majesty's Government, should be conditional on the Persian Government settling some of our long outstanding cases in token of their good-will, and on their assuming a more conciliatory attitude generally. At present they are even more than usually obstructive, owing to our refusal of a loan and other causes.

During the audience I confined myself to stating that Sir Nicholas O'Connor's attitude was doubtless based on your instructions; that I would at once convey His Majesty's request to my Government, from whom I doubted not that it would receive due consideration.

[10210]

No. 239.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 23.)*

(No. 74.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 23, 1906.*

YOUR telegram No. 44 of the 22nd March.

His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz telegraphed as follows on the 14th March :—

“ Prince Idjlal-ed-Dowleh, of Borasjun infamy, is the author of this complaint.

"On Sunday afternoon the Prince, riding at a distance of several hundred yards in front of the Shoa-es-Sultaneh's household, crossed to the far side of an avenue over 52 yards in breadth, and proceeded to break up a group composed of my sowars, who were tent-pegging with me, and of Persian spectators. The Prince rode up brandishing a stick. I, in my turn, rode up to him and very angrily remonstrated with him for raising his stick against the men of my escort. He answered that he had raised his stick against the crowd and not against my men, and offered to shake hands with me, but I refused to do so. I contradicted his assertion, which was several times repeated, and bade him remember that he had no right to raise his stick against my men, no matter whether he were a Prince or no.

"Mirza Reza Khan called about two hours later and repeated the explanations offered by the Prince. I thereupon withdrew my expressions, and wrote accepting his explanations. The complaint that I obstructed the Shoa-es-Sultaneh's household is ridiculous."

I informed the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, who had already complained to me, of the facts of the case, and also sent a message to him privately to the effect that I should have to raise the question of threatening our soldiers if he pursued the matter further. Two days ago his Excellency sent me a message to say that the Shah had decided not to press the complaint.

In 1904 Prince Idjlal-ed-Dowleh, who is a notorious ruffian, brutally assaulted at Borasjun a signaller of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, and, so far, no compensation has been paid for the assault.

His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz has done very well during a trying time, and I think this complaint is merely an attempt to discredit him. I submit that his indignation at a man of this description threatening our soldiers with a stick was justifiable. These constant complaints emanate from the Shoa-es-Sultaneh, enraged by his removal from Shiraz, and I should be most grateful if you could put a stop to them.

The Persian Government have, of course, been informed that there was not the faintest intention of showing disrespect to the Prince's household on the part of His Majesty's Consul.

[10211]

No. 240.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 23.)*

(No. 75. Confidential.)  
(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 23, 1906.*

PERSIAN complaint against His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz.  
It seems that your telegram No. 44 must have crossed one to the Persian Minister from the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, in which he is instructed to let the matter drop.

I have just been informed confidentially by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh that the late Governor-General of Fars is the author of these complaints, and that his object is to sow dissension between his Excellency and the Legation.

[10201]

No. 241.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.*

(No. 29.)  
(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, March 23, 1906.*

RUSSIAN Government suggest that we should strongly support the Persian contention with regard to the Turco-Persian frontier dispute, and that further pressure should be put on the Porte. We should be glad to know your views on the Russian Government's suggestion, and to be informed of the attitude adopted by your Russian colleague.

It might be opportune, in view of the attitude adopted by the Sultan with regard to the Sinai Peninsula, to take a stronger line about the Turco-Persian frontier, acting in concert with the Russian Ambassador in the matter.

[9421]

No. 242.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 46.)  
(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, March 23, 1906.*

WITH reference to your despatches Nos. 14, 15, and 47, the Persian Government are obviously, as in the case of Labaree, neither able nor willing to 'punish' the Kurds for the attack on Captain Gough. As no forcible action to enforce punishment can be taken by His Majesty's Government, nothing can be gained by sending further messages to the Persian Government. It therefore appears best to await the reply sent to Mr. Pearson by the United States' Government in answer to his request for instructions, and, in case of his being instructed to seek an audience of the Shah, you might join him and draw the attention of His Majesty to the Gough incident.

[9429]

No. 243.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 47.)  
Sir,

*Foreign Office, March 23, 1906.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 55 of the 28th February last reporting the ill-treatment of two British Consular messengers on the road between Shiraz and Bushire.

The terms of the note which you addressed on the 15th ultimo to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh on this subject have my approval.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

[10375]

No. 244.

*Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 24.)*

(No. 42.)  
(Telegraphic.) P.

*Constantinople, March 24, 1906.*

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Your telegram No. 29 of yesterday.

I am in close communication with Russian Ambassador, and have repeatedly made representations to Ottoman Government in same sense as my colleague. Before we go further, however, I should like to arrive at settlement of the Akaba frontier question.

In case Sultan should offer any resistance to our joint pressure, we should, I think, consider what actual measures we might then have to take, and, in view of the unfriendly attitude towards us generally assumed in recent times by the Shah's Government, how far it would be advisable to insist on an Agreement being enforced which for half a century has fallen into abeyance, unless His Majesty's Government are to obtain some advantages in compensation.

[10209]

No. 245.

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. E. Grant Duff.*

(No. 47.)  
(Telegraphic.) P.

*Foreign Office, March 24, 1906.*

QUESTION is being considered of instructing Sir N. O'Connor to act in concert with his Russian colleague, and to make a stronger representation at Constantinople concerning the Turco-Persian frontier dispute mentioned in your telegram No. 73 of the 23rd March.



[10387]

No. 246.

*Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 26.)*

(No. 174.)

*Constantinople, March 16, 1906.*

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 147 of the 5th instant, I have the honour to report that the Persian Ambassador called on me yesterday morning, and showed me a note (copy inclosed) which he had just received from the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs, stating that, inasmuch as the old reports drawn up by Dervish and Khorshid Pashas showed that certain points situated even further from the frontier than those now occupied by Turkish troops belong to the Ottoman Empire, the complaints of Persia were unfounded.

Prince Mirza Riza Khan was considerably agitated, and said that he could only understand from the note that the Porte contemplated some further encroachment on Persian territory, and he feared that the situation was likely to lead to very strained relations between the two countries. He was about to inform the Russian Ambassador of the Porte's communication, and earnestly hoped that M. Zinoviev and I would afford him our good offices and support to compose the dispute, and in the meantime he would be grateful for any advice I could give him as to the immediate action he should take.

I told his Highness that it seemed to me his best course for the moment was to call on the Grand Vizier and again urge on him the arguments and proofs employed by the Persian Government in favour of their contention, while urging, at the same time, his desire for the appointment of a mixed Commission of delimitation, and requiring, as a proof the Porte's good-will and a gauge of their friendly intentions, the withdrawal of the Ottoman troops from Passova, leaving the ownership of the other posts in suspense until the Commission gave its decision. I promised to take an early opportunity of speaking at the Porte in support of his contentions.

His Highness said that he would do so, and late in the evening he told me that he had found the Grand Vizier disposed to treat the question in a conciliatory spirit, and had explained that the note implied merely that the Porte considered that there were grounds to claim places on the Persian side of the undelimited zone as Turkish territory.

There was, however, no intention whatever to move the troops beyond the points they now occupied, and any representations which the Ambassador had to make would be carefully considered.

In the course of the afternoon I received a visit from the Russian Ambassador, who agreed with me in thinking that it might be difficult to induce the Porte to withdraw from Passova, or to agree to the arbitration of Great Britain and Russia, provided for by the Anglo-Russian Agreement of March 1865 ("Hertslet's Persian Treaties," p. 218), and that it would be well to report the state of the question to our respective Governments before making any formal proposal to the Porte implying a reference of the question to our decision, lest the Porte should refuse and place us in the position of submitting to a sort of rebuff or of going further than might be desirable.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 246.

*Tewfik Pasha to Prince Mirza Riza Khan.*

(Traduction.)

*Le 1<sup>er</sup> (14) Mars, 1906.*

D'APRÈS le contenu des rapports dressés dans le temps par feu Derviche et Khorchid Pachas concernant la frontière Persane, il résulte que certains points situés au delà des positions occupées actuellement par l'armée Impériale appartiennent aussi à l'Empire Ottoman, ce qui prouve que la plainte de votre Gouvernement n'est pas conforme à la réalité.

Je saisis, &c.  
Le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères,  
(Signé) TEWFIK.

[10402]

No. 247.

*Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 26.)*

(No. 188.)

*Constantinople, March 20, 1906.*

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 174 of the 16th instant, I have the honour to forward herewith a note from the Persian Ambassador at this Court, with copies of correspondence to the Sublime Porte, which his Highness has addressed to Tewfik Pasha on the Turco-Persian frontier question.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 247.

*Prince Riza Khan to Sir N. O'Connor.*

*Ambassade Impériale de Perse, Stamboul,  
le 19 Mars, 1906.*

M. l'Ambassadeur et cher Collègue,

J'AI l'honneur d'envoyer à votre Excellence ci-inclus les copies de mes notes remises, en langue Française, le 17 courant, à la Sublime Porte, relativement à l'affaire de la frontière et de Passvah, plus une copie en Turc.

Veillez, &c.  
(Signé) Prince M. RIZA KHAN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 247.

*Prince Riza Khan to Tewfik Pasha.*

M. le Ministre,

*Constantinople, le 21 Mouharem, 1324 (17 Mars, 1906).*

J'AI l'honneur d'accuser réception à votre Excellence de sa lettre du 18 de ce mois par laquelle elle me notifie la réponse, reproduite ci-après, aux diverses notes que j'ai eu l'honneur de remettre à la Sublime Porte au sujet de l'envahissement du territoire Persan par les troupes Ottomanes.

(Traduction littéraire.)

*"Le 18 Mouharem, 1324.*

"D'après le contenu des rapports dressés dans le temps par feu Derviche et Kharchied Pachas, concernant la frontière Persane, il résulte que certains points situés au-delà des positions occupées actuellement par l'armée Impériale appartiennent aussi à l'Empire Ottoman, ce qui prouve que la plainte de votre Gouvernement n'est pas conforme à la réalité."

"Je saisis, &c.  
"Le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères,  
(Signé) "TEWFIK PACHA."

En invoquant, comme des documents pouvant trancher la question du différend frontière qui existe entre les deux pays, les rapports faits autrefois par les Délégués Ottomans Derviche et Kharchied Pachas, la Sublime Porte méconnaît—et elle ne peut l'ignorer—que c'est précisément parce que la Turquie et la Perse ne parvenaient pas à s'entendre sur la détermination de la frontière qu'en 1851 les deux Gouvernements se sont mis d'accord pour confier le partage de la frontière à une Commission Mixte, composée des Délégués d'Angleterre, de Russie, de Turquie, et de Perse.

Est-il nécessaire de rappeler que cette Commission Mixte a inspecté et visité toute la frontière, et que de 1857 jusqu'en 1865 elle a dressé la carte de toute la frontière depuis le Golfe Persique jusqu'au Mont Ararat, en y figurant une zone de 20 à 40 milles de largeur comprenant tous les terrains en litige entre les deux pays. Après avoir terminé ce grand travail les Commissaires des deux Puissances Médiatrices remirent la carte, en exprimant l'opinion qu'il appartenait alors aux deux Gouvernements Musulmans de se mettre d'accord entre eux pour fixer la ligne frontière définitive dans les limites de la zone des terrains en litige. Cette carte, comme on le

sait, fut copiée et des exemplaires authentiques en furent remis officiellement à la Turquie et à la Perse par les soins des deux Puissances Médiatrices.

Cependant, le travail final de la ligne frontière ne fut pas entrepris et les deux Gouvernements se mirent d'accord pour maintenir provisoirement le *statu quo* dans la zone des terrains en litige, et cet accord a fait l'objet de la Convention du 2 Août, 1869 (24 Rebi-ul-Akhir, 1286), dont l'Article II stipule formellement que tous les lieux en litige au moment de la visite des Commissaires des Quatre Puissances demeureront provisoirement sous l'administration de l'État où ils se trouvaient, et que cet état de *statu quo* sera strictement respecté par les deux Parties Contractantes.

Or, la Sublime Porte possède un exemplaire officiel et authentique de la carte où figurent tous les lieux en litige au moment de la visite des Commissaires des Quatre Puissances, et elle n'ignore par conséquent pas que Vezné est situé dans la zone des lieux en litige, tandis que Passvah figure sur cette même carte à l'est de la dite zone, d'où il résulte que les Commissaires des Deux Puissances Médiatrices ont déclaré que Passvah appartient incontestablement à la Perse, ce qui est implicitement conforme à l'Arrangement de 1869. Quels pourraient dès lors être les lieux situés au-delà de Passvah, c'est-à-dire, encore plus loin de la frontière fixée par les Commissaires des Puissances Médiatrices, dont parle la lettre de votre Excellence comme appartenant aussi à la Turquie ? Ceci demande une explication, que je dois prier la Sublime Porte de bien vouloir me donner le plus tôt possible.

Le Gouvernement Ottoman ne peut dès lors pas invoquer l'opinion particulière de feu Derviche et Kharchied Pachas, pas d'avantage que la Perse ne pourrait invoquer l'opinion particulière de ses propres Délégués pour revendiquer des lieux qui sont inscrits sur la carte officielle à l'ouest de la zone des lieux en litige.

J'aime à espérer que le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, en considération des relations amicales qui existent si heureusement entre les deux États Musulmans et dans l'intérêt de l'humanité toute entière, voudra bien mettre fin à un état des choses si déplorable en donnant l'ordre aux troupes Impériales d'évacuer les points appartenant incontestablement à la Perse.

Je suis autorisé à déclarer qu'aussitôt après l'évacuation du territoire incontesté, le Gouvernement Persan enverra immédiatement une Commission sur la zone contestée pour entrer en pourparlers avec la Commission Impériale, afin de parvenir amicalement à la délimitation de la frontière et mettre aussi définitivement fin aux difficultés qui occupent depuis si longtemps les hommes d'État des deux pays Musulmans, auxquels une foi comme dans l'Islamisme impose une amitié et une fraternité dans toutes les circonstances de la vie.

Veuillez, &c.  
(Signé) Prince RIZA M. KHAN.

Inclosure 3 in No. 247.

*Prince Riza Khan to Tewfik Pasha.*

M. le Ministre,

Constantinople, le 17 Mars, 1906

J'AI eu l'honneur de recevoir de la part de votre Excellence par l'intermédiaire du Général Ohannès Khan, Premier Drogman de cette Ambassade Impériale, le résumé du rapport télégraphique envoyé de Ravandouz par son Excellence Vadjid Pacha, au sujet de la possession de certains territoires se trouvant, soit dans la zone des terrains en litige entre les deux pays, soit dans l'Empire Persan, et qui viennent d'être envahis par les troupes Ottomanes.

Je dois faire remarquer que les arguments exposés dans le dit résumé n'ont pour base que l'impression personnelle de Vadjid Pacha, impression qu'il dit d'ailleurs être conforme à l'opinion exprimée dans les anciens rapports de feu Derviche Pacha et Kharchied Pacha. Je ne me trouve par conséquent pas devant un document pouvant faire autorité pour trancher un litige aussi important entre nos deux Gouvernements. A cet égard, je dois me référer aux documents officiels qui existent déjà et qui sont :—

1. Le Traité d'Erzeroum de 1847 ;
2. La carte officielle de la zone des terrains en litige qui a été dressée de 1857 jusqu'au 1865 par les Commissaires des Deux Puissances Médiatrices après la visite et l'inspection de la frontière par les Commissaires des Quatre Puissances ; et

[10598]

No. 247\*.

*Captain Cox to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 26.)*

(No. 76.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Bushire, March 26, 1906.*

CABLE-HOUSE at Bunder Abbas.

I learn that Reuter's agent at Bunder Abbas or Bushire is sending a message to London giving a misleading version of the existing dispute. The presence of His Majesty's ship "Fox" and the visit of the Admiral are ascribed to this cause, whereas the Admiral arrives on the 29th on his annual cruise in the Persian Gulf and the "Fox" went to Bunder Abbas in connection with the arms traffic.

I recommend that the message, the promulgation of which is most undesirable, should be stopped or promptly corrected.

[1618]

3 Q\*

3. L'Arrangement intervenu le 2 Août, 1869 (24 Rebi-ul-Akhir, 1286), entre les deux Gouvernements, et en vertu duquel il a été convenu que les terrains en litige au moment de la visite des quatre Commissaires demeureront provisoirement sous l'administration de l'État où ils se trouvaient, et que cet état de *statu quo* sera strictement respecté par les deux Parties Contractantes jusqu'à la délimitation définitive.

Ce sont là les seuls documents incontestables que nous possédons, et c'est nécessairement sur cette base que l'examen de contestations frontières doit avoir lieu. Or, ainsi que je l'ai déjà écrit dans ma dépêche de ce jour, la carte officielle et authentique des terrains en litige indique Vezné comme faisant partie des terrains en litige, tandis qu'elle désigne Passvah comme appartenant incontestablement à la Perse.

Quelle valeur pourrait-on dès lors accorder à l'opinion contraire personnellement exprimée maintenant par Vadjid Pacha, ou auparavant par feu Derviche et Kharchied Pachas. Si l'on pouvait admettre une pareille procédure, la Perse pourrait de même revendiquer la propriété des terrains indiqués par les rapports de ses Commissaires comme devant appartenir à l'Empire de Perse. De part et d'autre, de pareilles prétentions sont inadmissibles. Les effets de la visite et de l'inspection de la frontière faites par les Commissaires des Quatre Puissances de 1857 jusqu'à 1865, qui ont été corroborés par la Convention Turco-Persane de 1869, ne peuvent pas être annihilés par des opinions particulières Persanes ou Ottomanes.

Je ne puis, en conséquence, que persévérer dans mes protestations antérieures et exprimer une fois de plus l'espoir que le Gouvernement Ottoman, à bref délai, ordonnera l'évacuation du territoire Persan, pour qu'il devienne enfin possible de reprendre l'œuvre de 1865 et de terminer la délimitation de la frontière sur des bases acceptables pour les deux pays.

Veuillez, &c.  
(Signé) Prince RIZA M. KHAN.

[10088]

No. 248.

*Foreign Office to India Office.*

Sir,

*Foreign Office, March 26, 1906.*

WITH reference to the correspondence ending with my letter of the 28th July, 1905, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,\* reporting that the Governor of Kain has renewed his request for a loan.

Sir E. Grey sees no reason to modify the view expressed to Sir A. Hardinge in telegram No. 61 of the 28th July, 1905, and proposes, if Mr. Morley concurs, to inform Mr. Grant Duff accordingly.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) E. GORST.

[10676]

No. 249.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 27.)*

(No. 78.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 27, 1906.*

HENJAM—Bunder Abbas cable.

Major Cox' telegram of the 26th March. I am doing my best to settle the dispute about the location of the Telegraph Office and cable house, which has been proceeding ever since the end of January last.

I have given instructions to stop Reuter's mischievous message from being published in Persia.

The messenger leaving on the 30th March will carry a full report on this question.

[1618]

• No. 236.

3 Q

[10766]

No. 250.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 28.)*

Sir, *India Office, March 27, 1906.*  
I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to acknowledge Sir E. Gorst's letter of the 6th instant, inclosing Mr. Grant Duff's despatch No. 35 of the 2nd February last, which transmitted a copy of a letter addressed by Major Sykes, His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Meshed, to the Government of India, embodying his views on the present state of Persia, and the steps which should be taken in anticipation of the breaking up of the existing order of things in Persia.

In reply, I am to request that you will draw Sir E. Grey's attention to the letters from the Government of India of the 4th February, 1904, and of the 17th August, 1905, which express the views of the Government of India at that time upon the subject. Mr. Morley would suggest for consideration whether it might not be well that these letters with other papers bearing on the subject should be laid before the Committee of Imperial Defence.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[10806]

No. 251.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 28.)*

(No. 80.)  
(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 28, 1906.*

BAKHTIARI road.

I am informed by His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire that Major Morton has examined and reported on the Bakhtiari road. Major Morton was recently in Persia in connection with the Karun irrigation scheme. His report is now on its way to me. It would seem that, in these circumstances, the dispatch of His Majesty's Consul at Ahwaz to inspect the road is unnecessary.

(Repeated to India.)

[10801]

No. 252.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 28.)*

(No. 81.)  
(Telegraphic.) P.  
SEISTAN.

*Tehran, March 28, 1906.*

In connection with the measures being taken for the suppression of the plague, serious disturbances have broken out in Seistan.

The India Office have presumably communicated full details to you, which, in accordance with the arrangement recently arrived at with the Government of India, should be in their possession.

[10802]

No. 253.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 28.)*

(No. 82.)  
(Telegraphic.) P.  
SEISTAN riots.

*Tehran, March 28, 1906.*

Immediately on the receipt of the news I went to see the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, who, in my presence, sent telegrams to the Scistan authorities and to the Governor-General of Khorassan, instructing them to afford protection to His Majesty's Consulate.

Offence would be given here by sending troops from Robat.

[10846]

No. 254.

*India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 29.)*

Sir, *India Office, March 28, 1906.*  
IN reply to Sir E. Gorst's letter of the 20th March, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to say that he sees no objection to Sir E. Grey's proposal that His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz should be instructed to proceed to Ram Hormuz in order to place himself in touch with the Bakhtiari Chiefs and report upon the condition of the Ahwaz-Ispahan road. It is, however, assumed that, in the event of the Company taking action upon his report, the responsibility will rest entirely upon them.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[10911]

No. 255.

*Mr. E. Grant Duff to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 29.)*

(No. 84.)  
(Telegraphic.) P.

*Tehran, March 29, 1906.*

HENJAM. Your telegram No. 34.

His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire telegraphs as follows:—

"Customs Department to-day began to erect building within the limits of the Indo-European Telegraph Department at Henjam. This is regarded by the Arab inhabitants as an indication that I admit the jurisdiction of the Persian Government over them. The Arab Sheikh warns the Assistant Superintendent that there will be disturbances, and has informed representative of Indo-European Telegraph Department that he is unable to restrain the inhabitants any longer. Provision must be made for the safety of our staff, and I should be glad if one of His Majesty's ships could proceed to Henjam and remain there for the present.

"A call might first be made at the Arab village, and the Arabs should be warned that their case is under discussion, and that disturbances will not be tolerated meanwhile.

"Sent to Naval Commander-in-chief at Bunder Abbas on the 28th March, and repeated on the 29th March to Tehran and the Government of India."

On receipt of above I sent an urgent note to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, requesting that, pending negotiations, orders might be sent to stop the building. I added that, in order to protect British property and subjects, one of His Majesty's ships was being sent to Henjam.

[10083]

No. 256.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.*

(No. 126.)  
Sir,

*Foreign Office, March 31, 1906.*

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith copy of a letter from the India Office relative to telegraphic communication between Constantinople and the Persian Gulf and the improvement of the telegraph service to Mohammerah.\*

You will observe that attention is called to the suggestion made in October 1904 that the Turkish Government should be asked to open a telegraph office on the Fao-Bussorah line opposite to Mohammerah, and that a boat service should be arranged for the delivery of messages to that port.

I should be glad to learn your views as to whether there would be any objection to approaching the Turkish Government in the sense suggested by the India Office, and whether there would be a reasonable prospect of their entertaining the proposal.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) EDWARD GREY.